

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND
THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT
IN BOTSWANA

William John Allan Macartney



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A B S T R A C T

This study of rural local government in Botswana - from 1966 to 1974, with special reference to the Central, North East and Southern (originally Ngwaketse) District Councils - focusses especially upon two aspects: party politics and "development". The former entailed an in-depth analysis of elections, motions and questions in the Council, and party organisation outside, while the latter is reflected in the special attention paid in the dissertation to the determination of priorities and the allocation of resources within the Council and, outside, to a study of "self-help" and Village Development Committees in nine villages, three in each of the above Districts.

A variety of methods was used: extensive interviewing, participant observation and, above all, reliance on the very full documentation which was made available. Such cross-checking is essential to determine the degree of generalisation which is permissible concerning the complexities of a system which was new, which varied considerably in practice from place to place and which was characterised by a small scale of operations.

Thus the party "system" is in general of little value in predicting policy positions, although crucial for understanding elections: Councils are not composed of Independents. Moreover there are differences between the two Opposition parties studied (the National Front and the People's Party).

Clear trends are discernible in the relations between the central Government and the Councils. Starting with the premise that "democratic

local government" should replace the rule of the Chiefs, the Government transferred a number of functions to local authorities, but subsequently resorted to new hybrid bodies - the Land Boards and District Development Committees - to deal with certain District-level functions. The future for District Councils therefore remained problematical at the end of the period studied. In summary the choice to be made by the ruling Democratic Party lies between strengthening the "pyramid of democratic institutions" stressed in the Government's rhetoric, or relying increasingly on a purely administrative approach.

This is to certify that this thesis was composed
by myself and is the result of my own work.

Edinburgh
17th January 1978

.....
W. J. Allan Macartney

S U M M A R Y

This dissertation is concerned primarily with the institutions of rural local government: their internal workings; their relationship with other institutions at village, district and national level; and their two-way relationship with the political ecology of the country. Special attention is paid within the study to the question of rural development and its relationship with institutional factors as well as with wider socio-economic forces. A special attraction of Botswana was the fact that it was, and is, a member of a very exclusive club of African multi-party democracies, one in which fundamental freedoms are respected. The relatively open nature of the political and administrative process thus allows a social scientist maximum scope for obtaining data, investigating phenomena and checking conclusions.

Apart from the Introductory and Concluding chapters (Chapters 1 and 10), the study is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the district level, Part II the grassroots, and Part III the national level. The reason for this somewhat unorthodox order is that the main focus is on the District Councils. Accordingly an attempt is made in Part I not only to analyse the political processes within the three Councils selected for this study but also to see the political system as a whole from the perspective of the Districts. This approach is then followed through in the subsequent parts; an understanding of the Councils themselves is a prerequisite for appreciating their relations with other bodies and forces.

Chapter 2 thus starts with an analysis of the behaviour of Councillors within the institution. Their role as representatives, the most salient issues raised, the significance of voting, and their managerial function are dealt with. Particular attention is paid to the variables of party allegiance and geography (in the case of elected Councillors), from which the conclusion emerges that the former is of central importance for committee elections but little else, while the latter bears a relationship with the matters brought to the Council, and also to committee membership.

Finally in this chapter the position of the non-elected Councillors is examined. This category includes Chiefs and also a variable number of political nominees. Some of the expectations about the leadership role of this group are borne out, but it is noted that, overall, the elected Councillors came increasingly to assert themselves.

For various reasons there are clearly limitations on the usefulness of the aggregate data analysed in Chapter 2. Some of this is due to the low incidence of party caucussing, and its parallel, the high degree of informality and individualism in full Council and committees: in other words the party "system" is of little value as a predictive device. Another reason is the fact that where patterns can be traced from aggregation these are usually unperceived, even by well-placed observers at District Headquarters, because of the lack of conscious or obvious pursuit of objectives by Councillors. Even this generalisation has to be qualified as significant differences can be discerned among the three selected Districts. These variants are in part attributable to the socio-economic ecology peculiar to each District, but are also an inevitable concomitant of the small scale of operations - in other words the influence of individuals can

be clearly discerned. (Nevertheless one must beware of going to the opposite extreme and discounting party as a variable altogether: most Councillors are elected on the basis of their allegiance to a political party, however weak that party may be in terms of ideology or even clearcut programme. The Councils are not collections of Independents.)

Accordingly the flavour of politics in each of the three District Councils is examined in turn, in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Each chapter opens with an account of the way the Council conducted its business. The crucial relationship between the Council bureaucracy (headed and personified by the Council Secretary as chief executive) and the Councillors is explored here. The facilities available to Councillors and the question of allowances are discussed from the viewpoint of the Councillors.

There follows an examination of the most important issues which occupied the attention of the Council, including those which gave rise to controversy. From this somewhat intricate account emerge some ideas of the attitudes - corporate or partisan as the case may be - to important and/or sensitive issues. Here some of the differences among the different Councils can be extracted from the largely pragmatic approach which generally characterised the decision-making process in the Councils. Councillors' interests are dealt with insofar as these impinge upon Council business.

Arguably the most important matter to determine from an analysis of the internal workings of the Councils is the allocation of resources. In particular, given Botswana's increasing devotion to rolling five-year plans, this section deals with planning and the determination of priorities. In practice the key aspect here is the extent to which

Councillors are able and willing to challenge and alter the plans drawn up by Council officials (many of them expatriate volunteer "technocrats"). Variations among the three Councils are again a notable factor.

In the study of two Councils a number of special issues require separate treatment as case studies: the position of Chief Bathoen in the Southern District, and, for the Central District, the question of decentralisation and the position of the Education Secretary.

The central position of District Councils in the rural administrative and political system demands an examination of the Councils' relations in two, or perhaps three, directions: in diagrammatic terms, downwards to the villages, where village development/Ipelegeng and the role of Councillors are examined; outwards/downwards to the traditional administration; outwards to the District Administration and (later) the District Development Committee and the Land Boards; and upwards to the central Government, MPs and even foreign donors. Most of these relationships are picked up again in other chapters from the other end of the relationship; at this stage it is the Council viewpoint which is portrayed.

Finally in each of these three case study chapters the District is analysed as a political arena. The three variables/aspects which are singled out for particular treatment are: ethnic factors (so important in most African polities and frequently referred to in connexion with the Batswana political parties); elections; and lastly a summary of policy cleavages (such as they are) between parties.

In Part II the focus moves to the grassroots, where the two most important institutions are the Village Development Committees

and the political parties. Chapter 6 deals with the VDCs in nine villages (three from each district). Following a similar format to Chapters 3 to 5, the constitutions and internal workings of the VDCs are examined, with an attempt to distil some kind of constitutional theory from the mass of sometimes contradictory practice in the nine villages. The determination of priorities is analysed and this is seen to link up with the next section, the VDC and other forces in the village (i.e. the horizontal relationship, notably with those recognised with an ex officio position on the VDC - Councillors, Headmen and CDAs - and other village organisations). Next follows the all-important relationship with the people of the village, where the crucial importance of the kgotla as the channel for communications and influence between the VDC and the people is brought out. Also on the "vertical" plane, but in the other direction, attention is then directed upwards to the District Council (and other district-level organisations, mainly the District Administration). This section pays special attention to the concept of the "broker" or "middleman". It is found that the increasing bureaucratisation of communications leaves limited scope for such a role - which can however be pursued effectively by some individuals with imagination and political/administrative ability. Such individuals are drawn from various categories, and by no means only the elected politicians (Councillors or MPs).

Throughout the chapter the wide variation as among the various villages studied is brought out clearly. The VDCs in the nine villages are therefore briefly described seriatim and some conclusions on the VDCs end the chapter.

The other chapter within the "grassroots" section deals with the organisation of the political parties. As they are primarily vehicles for election (to the National Assembly and the Councils), the recruitment of candidates is given special attention. Finally the question of party and VDCs is examined. It is found that, despite Government stress on the "non-political" nature of the VDC, many party members are to be found on these committees.

In Part III the focus is on the national level. In Chapter 8 is found an account of the relations between the Central Government and the District Councils. It is presented chronologically since the most striking fact about the relationship is its dynamics, culminating in the post-1970 "Tordoff" reforms establishing a District Development Committee coordinating and planning system, which is considered in the last part of the chapter.

Chapter 9 deals with Members of Parliament and their attitudes towards and relationship with local government. It is found that the institutional links are weak and that MPs much prefer to stress the direct link with the people involved in the concept of representative. The MPs representing the nine villages studied in Chapter 6 come in for special scrutiny, from which contrasting levels and styles of activity clearly emerge. But their role as brokers or middlemen is in general largely discounted.

The final chapter attempts to bring together a number of themes which have emerged from the study, finishing with some observations about the trends observable to date, and some speculation about the future of democratic local government in Botswana.

P R E F A C E

I first set foot in Botswana on the last day of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1966; the country has fascinated me ever since. The field work for this study was done over a four year period from 1970 to 1974. Even before I became resident in Gaborone, with the opening of the University campus there in 1971, I was able to make regular visits to Botswana from the original campus of UBLS, at Roma (Lesotho), where I first took up a post in 1966.

I would like to express my warm thanks to the University of Botswana Lesotho and Swaziland for its financial support, extending over a period of several years, for my research. It made possible not only the extensive travelling involved in this study but also such things as enrolment in a crash course in Setswana. I am also grateful to the Open University for a grant towards the costs of producing the thesis. To the Botswana Government, particularly the Office of the President, I would like to express my appreciation of their assistance in smoothing the way for the research.

My thanks are due to several individuals for setting me on the path of this piece of research: to Tom Price (formerly the African Studies Department of Glasgow University) for advising me to "stay for at least five years and learn the language"; to Clara Taukobong (formerly of Radio Botswana) for making me aware of my ignorance, in 1969, of grassroots politics in Botswana; to Professor Harry Hanham (then of the Politics Department, University of Edinburgh) for encouraging me to consider doing a doctorate at Edinburgh; to his

successor, Professor James Cornford, for assisting in the selection of a topic and in many other ways; to my original supervisor, Jabez Langley, for his advice at the outset; and to his successor, Chris Allen, who as my supervisor did a painstaking job of reading all the draft and suggested many improvements.

As regards the field work, I owe an immense debt of gratitude to all the people who freely gave of their time and knowledge. They include former colleagues at UBLS; Ministers and other Members of Parliament; Councillors; VDC members; party activists; Chiefs and Headmen; District Development Committee members; civil servants, particularly of the Ministry of Local Government & Lands; Council staff; District Administration staff; UBLS students; and numerous citizens of Botswana who provided me - as did many of the above - with generous and unfailing hospitality. All those above-mentioned helped to make my voyage of discovery both absorbing and enjoyable.

A special word of thanks is due to those who undertook the time-consuming task of reading and commenting on chapters in draft.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of my wife, Anne, as both research assistant and typist.

With all the assistance I received there are few excuses for any errors of fact. I am alone responsible for any which may have occurred, as for the opinions expressed in this dissertation.

Edinburgh
January 1978

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EDITORIAL NOTES

TERMINOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

I have tried to follow the modern and progressive usage in Botswana in matters of terminology, but older forms survive, particularly in documents cited. For example, in place of the word "tribe" I have used "clan", as the closest approximation to the Setswana word morafe. "Traditional", "customary" or "clan" have replaced "tribal" (formerly "African", and before that "Native") in referring to law and administration.

Place names have been revised by the Place Names Commission, with a series of reports from 1969 onwards; the most obvious is Gaborone, the capital, which replaced the anglicised "Gaberones". Some of the old names, e.g. of constituencies, appear in their historical context. As there are no accepted English versions of the locative forms of clan territories I have used the Setswana forms: Gamangwato = the territory of the Bangwato; Gangwaketse = the territory of the Bangwaketse, and Borolong = the territory of the Barolong (in Botswana).

Probably the most important point to note is the use of words derived from the root Tswana, since a linguistic map would show Setswana as spoken in parts of South Africa but not all of Botswana. Thus all citizens of Botswana are called Batswana (singular: Motswana), but not all are Tswanas, a term which also includes over a million people across the border. The language of the Tswanas is Setswana. The Setswana-speaking population is divided

into merafe (clans), which use the prefixes Ba- and Mo- (plural and singular), e.g. the Bakwena, a Mokwena. For non-Tswana people usage varies: thus "the Basarwa" (or Bushmen) but "the Kalanga(s)". (Northern place-names must be treated with care since some use the Setswana orthography but other Kalanga or other names.)

As a brief guide to Setswana pronunciation, the following points can be made:

- g = ch as in German or Gaelic "loch"
(it always has this quality, except after "n")
- ng = ng as in "singer"
- ph = p as in "Clapham"
- th = t as in "Streatham"
- ts = ts as in "that's it"
- tsh = tsh as in "it's his"
- tšh = ch as in "chair"

The old orthography (surviving in proper names) included:

- kh = modern kg
- c = ts
- ñ = ng
- o before a vowel = w

Syllables almost invariably end in a vowel, and the stress normally falls on the penultimate syllable (but terminal ng counts as a syllable and lengthens the preceding vowel).

GLOSSARY

The following words have been used, without accompanying translation, in the text:

- bogosi - the institution of Chieftainship
- dikgafêla - tribute, first fruits, harvest thanksgiving (see p. 127)
- Domkrag - Democratic Party (see p. x)
- Ipelegeng - Self-help (see pp. 38-39)
- kgosana - (plural, dikgosana) - Headman
- kgosi - Chief, Lord

kgotla (plural, dikgotla) - traditional council, court,
general meeting (see pp. 281-282)

matimêla - stray livestock (see p. 54)

shè [Kalanga] - Chief, Sub-chief, Headman (see p. 92)

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear, particularly in
footnotes:

ACDO	Assistant Community Development Officer
AD	Agricultural Demonstrator
ARDP	Accelerated Rural Development Programme
B II	(ex-)Chief Bathoefi II
BCW	Botswana Council of Women
BDN	<u>Botswana Daily News</u>
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party (formerly Bechuanaland Democratic Party)
BIP	Botswana Independence Party
BNF	Botswana National Front
BN&R	<u>Botswana Notes and Records</u>
BPP	Botswana People's Party (formerly Bechuanaland People's Party)
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CDC	Central District Council
CDDC	Central District Development Committee
C&ED	Community & Economic Development Committee
DDC	District Development Committee
DEMS	Division of Extra-Mural Services
EA	(Census) Enumerator Area
F&GP	Finance & General Purposes Committee
GP	General Purposes Committee
GP&D	General Purposes & Development Committee
H&W	Health & Works Committee
KYTC	Kanye Youth Training Centre
LegCo	Legislative Council
MLG&L	Ministry of Local Government & Lands (formerly Ministry of Local Government)
NEDC	North East District Council
NEDDC	North East District Development Committee
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SDC	Southern District Council
SDDC	Southern District Development Committee
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TLC	Trade Licensing Committee
UBLS	University of Botswana Lesotho and Swaziland
UCCSA	Congregational Church
ULGS	Unified Local Government Service
UNIP	United National Independence Party [Zambia]
VDC	Village Development Committee
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

MISCELLANEOUS

The currency used in the period studied was the South African Rand. In 1966 R2 was equal to £1 sterling, but devaluation of sterling altered the position. Now Botswana has its own independent Pula, which started at par with the Rand.

"Councillor" has been used to mean a member of a District or Town Council; it is not to be confused with "counsellors" in the traditional system.

For convenience I have referred to the period between two sets of local government elections as a "Session": a Session in this sense has since 1969 been the equivalent of "a Parliament".

The sources for electoral data are the Reports of the Supervisor of Elections, listed in the Bibliography, the Mafeking Mail, the Daily News, the Government Gazette, annual Statistical Abstract, and Ministry of Local Government & Lands files.

The term "Ngwaketse District" meant, prior to 1970, what is now the Southern District, which confusingly still includes, for census and some other purposes, the Ngwaketse and Rolong (census) districts. For simplicity the Council is generally referred to in this thesis as the Southern District Council (SDC) throughout the period 1966-1974.

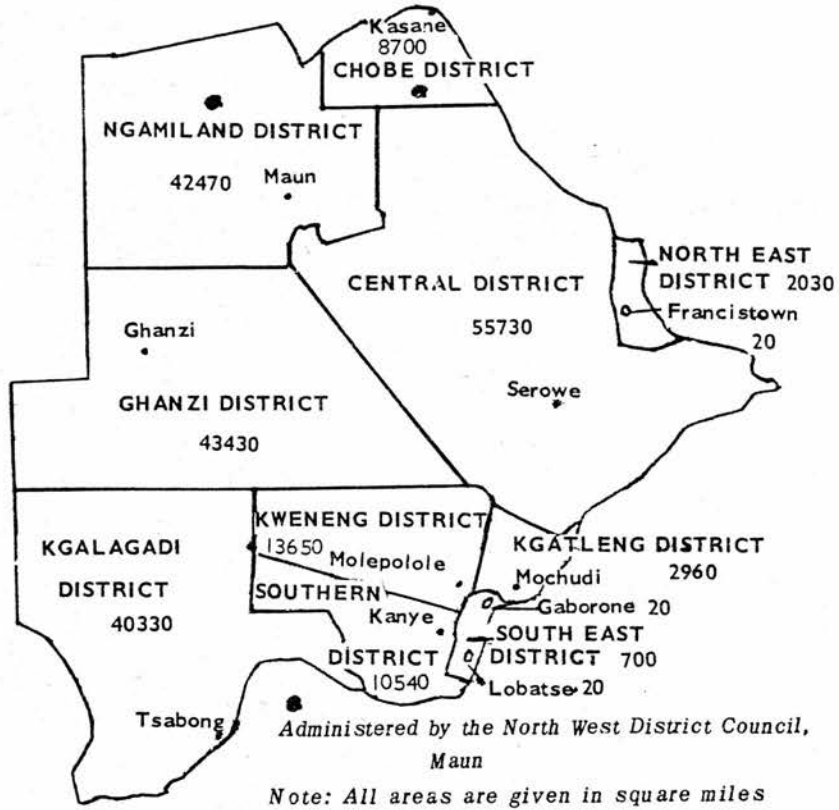
The widely-used nickname for the Democratic Party, Domkrag, arose from a misunderstanding of the word "Democratic", which one anonymous villager took to be the Afrikaans word "domkrag", which means a vehicle jack. The BDP's opponents delightedly punned that it meant "dom krag" (i.e. literally, stupid power); the BDP however adopted the symbol of the jack as the "power to raise the level" of the country.

The University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS) has since split into two. There is now a University of Botswana and Swaziland with a constituent University College in Gaborone and one in Swaziland.

"Ward" can mean two things - a traditional unit of administration or a local government Polling District. Unless otherwise indicated it is the latter which is meant in this dissertation.

MAP 1

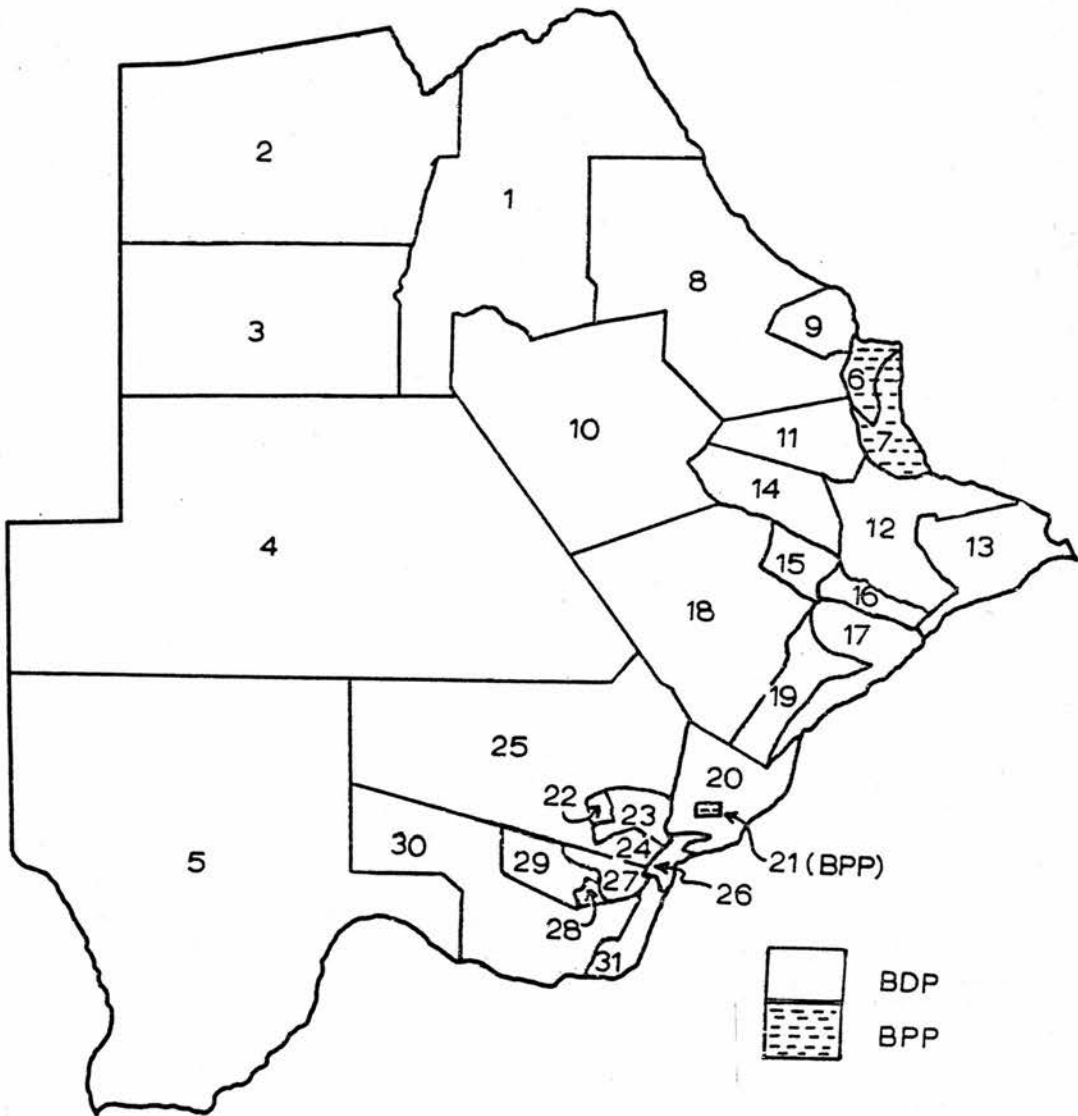
DISTRICT AND TOWN COUNCIL AREAS



SOURCE: Botswana Information Services, Our National Development Plan 1970-1975

MAP 2

THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1965

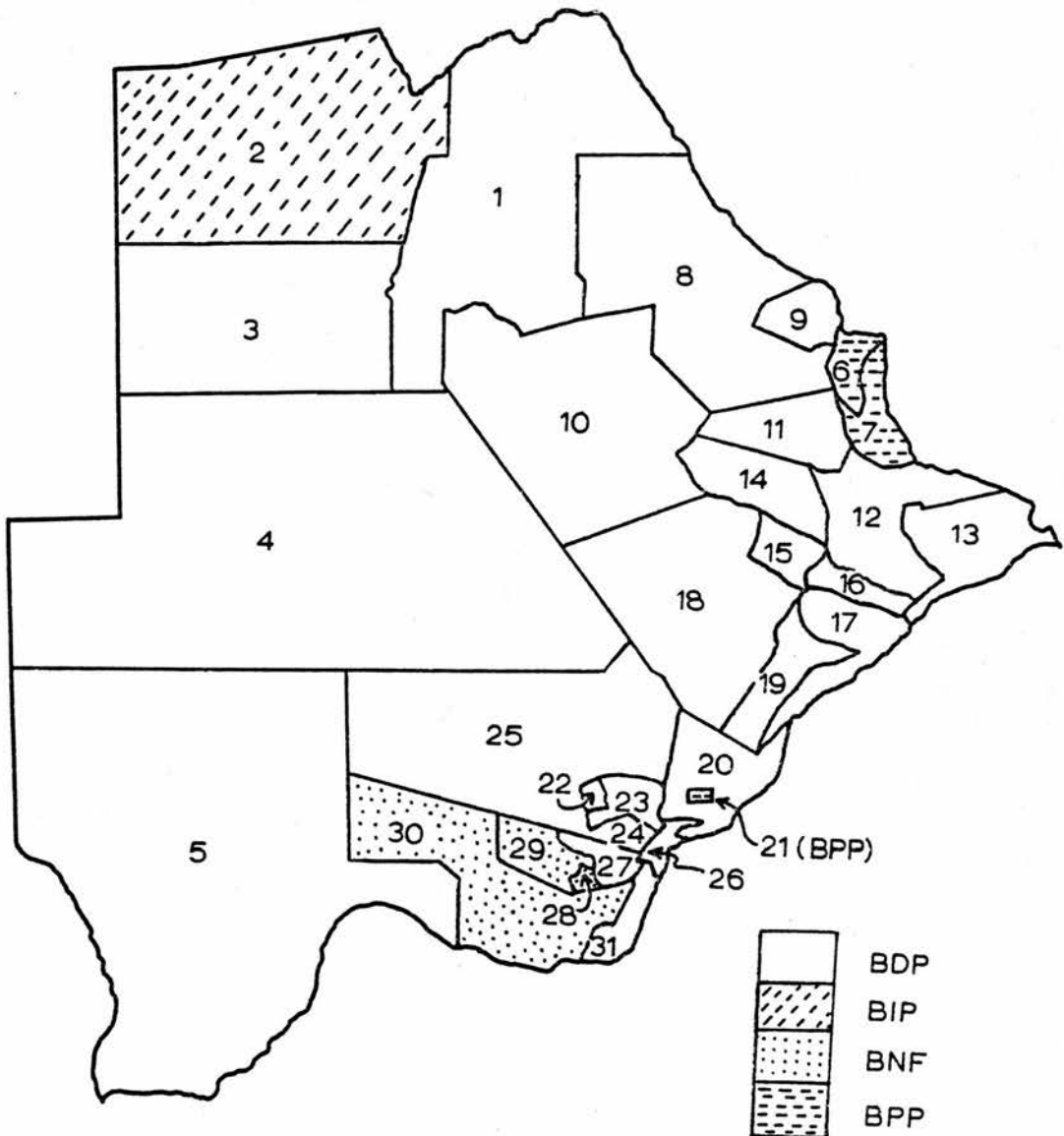


CONSTITUENCY

1 Maun/Chobe	12 Madinare	22 Molepolole North
2 Okavango	13 Bobirwa	23 Molepolole South
3 Ngami	14 Serowe North	24 Kweneng South
4 Ghanzi	15 Serowe South	25 Kweneng West
5 Kgalagadi	16 Tswapong North	26 Gaberones/Ramoutsa
6 Tati West	17 Tswapong South	27 Moshupa
7 Francistown/Tati East	18 Shoshong	28 Kanye South
8 Sebina/Gweta	19 Mahalapye	29 Kanye North
9 Nkange	20 Kgatleng/Tlokwen	30 Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi
10 Botletle	21 Mochudi	31 Lobatsi/Barolong
11 Tonota		

MAP 3

THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1969

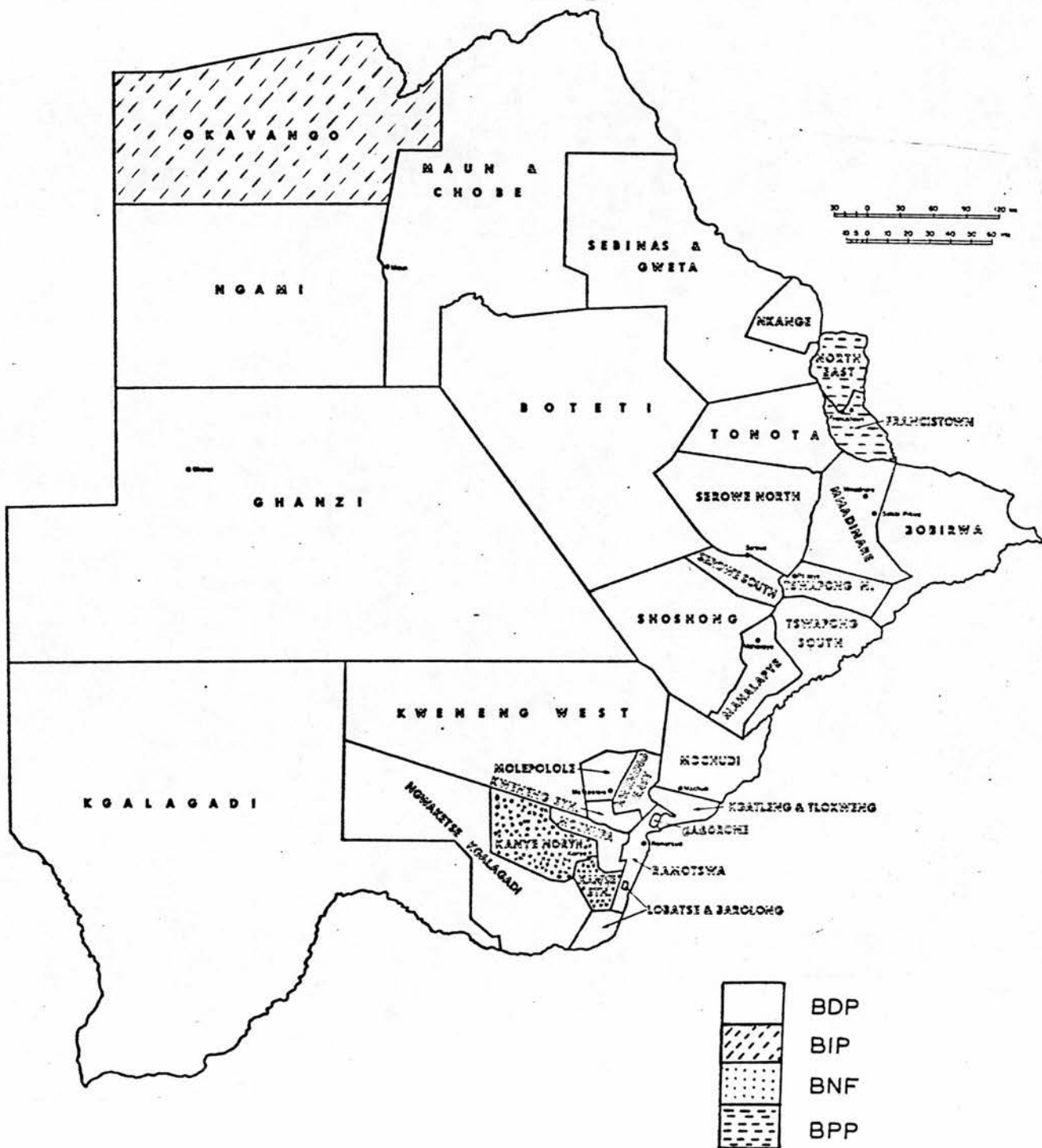


CONSTITUENCY

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11 Tonota		

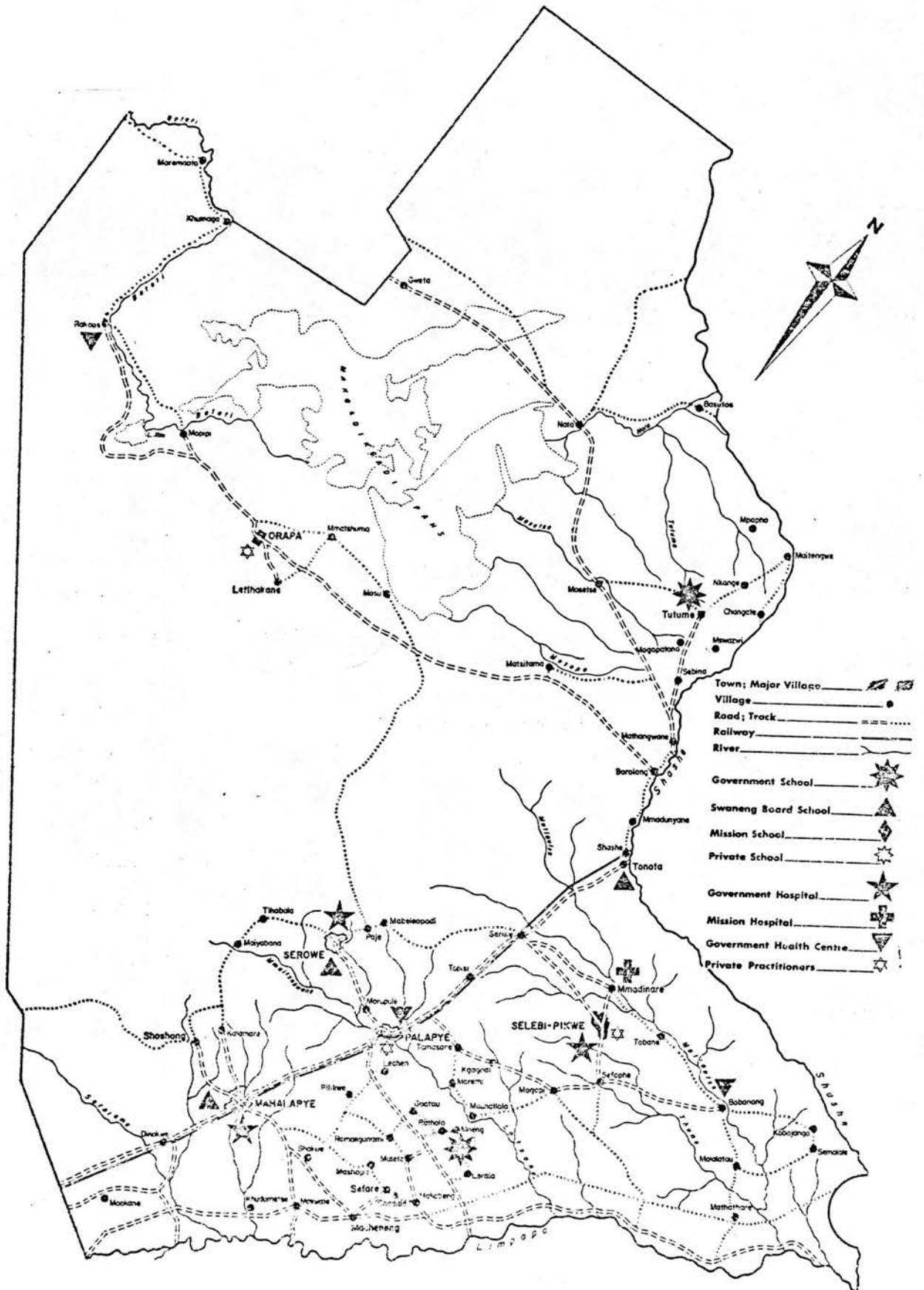
MAP 4

THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1974



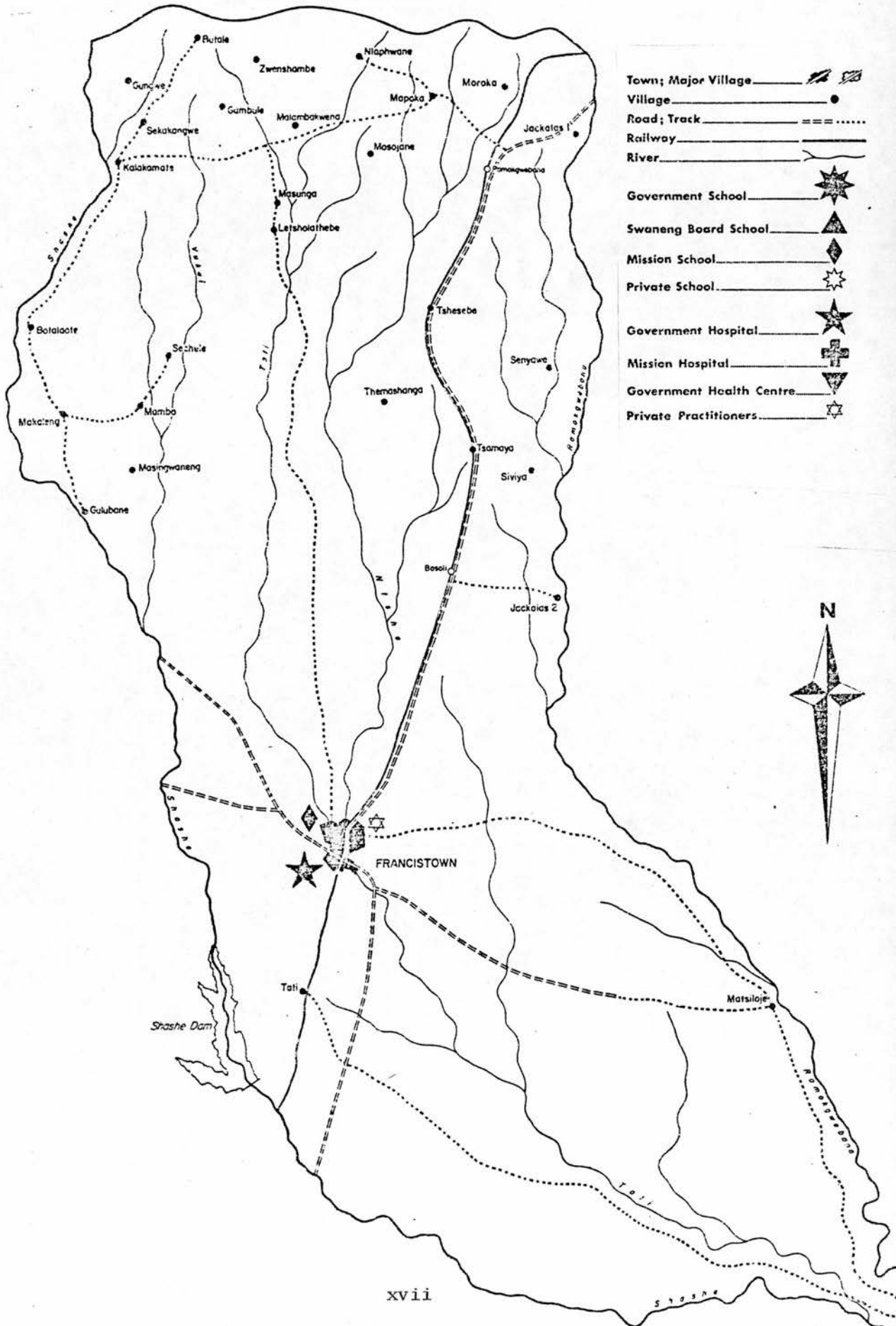
MAP 5

THE CENTRAL DISTRICT



MAP 6

THE NORTH EAST DISTRICT



[illegible]

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

The decision to embark on a study of local government in Botswana was prompted by a number of factors, practical and methodological on the one hand and theoretical on the other. In practical terms the position held by the writer in the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland gave physical access to the three countries served by the University as well as the neighbouring countries. The choice of Botswana was influenced strongly by the open democratic political process in Botswana at the national and local levels - unique in Southern Africa - and the welcome given by the authorities and the people in Botswana to social scientists engaged in research.

The selection of the District Councils as the main focus of concern was influenced by a number of writers¹ who had focussed attention

1 The writers and works from which inspiration and ideas were drawn include notably the following:- G. A. Almond, "Determinacy-Choice, Stability-Change: some thoughts on a contemporary polemic in political theory," Government & Opposition, V, 1 (1970); D. Apter, Ghana in Transition (1963) and The Political Kingdom in Uganda (1961); F. G. Bailey, Stratagems and Spoils (1969); J. Barber, Imperial Frontier (1968); H. Bienen, Tanzania (1970); J. M. Blaut, "The Theory of Development," Antipode, V, 2 (1973); J. C. Charlesworth (Ed.), Contemporary Political Analysis (1968); J. S. Coleman, Nigeria (1960); K. W. Deutsch, "On communication models in the Social Sciences," Public Opinion Quarterly, XVI (1952); S. E. Finer, "Almond's Concept of 'The Political System': a textual critique," Government & Opposition, V, 1 (1970); J. S. Furnivall, Colonial policy and Practice (1948); Gutkind & Wallerstein (Eds.), The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa (1976); G. A. Heeger, The Politics of Underdevelopment (1974); G. Hydén, Political Development in Rural Tanzania (1969); H. G. Johnson (Ed.), Economic Nationalism in Old and New States (1968); M. Kilson, Political

on the need to study the political process amongst the rural majority of Africa as a corrective to the studies of national politics with their sometimes uncritical acceptance of the rhetoric of national leaders. At the other end of the spectrum there was a long tradition of anthropological study of small communities. What was lacking in Botswana, as in many other African states, was an understanding of the relationship between the centre and the periphery of the new polity. In the case of Botswana the intermediate level has been dominated since 1966 by the District Councils, which link up with both national politics and the grassroots.

A particular interest of local government arose from the need for a much better understanding of Botswana's political parties, and the assumption that Councillors, elected overwhelmingly on a party ticket, would in their approach to decision-making throw much light on the elusive differences between the four parties in Botswana. There was an enigma concerning party policies; on the one hand differences of approach appeared to exist at the national level - as revealed in Parliamentary debates and election campaigning - but in the Council context, on the other hand, a frequently recurring answer to questions concerning party differences was that there were no real

Change in a West African State (1966); G. Lamb, Peasant Politics (1974); J. G. LaPalombara (Ed.), Bureaucracy and Political Development (1967); C. Leys, Politicians and Policies (1967) and (Ed.), Politics and Change in Developing Countries (1969); G. Myrdal, Economic theory and Underdeveloped Regions (1957) and Asian Drama (1968); P. Nettl, Political Mobilisation (1967); F. W. Riggs, Administration in Developing Countries (1964); R. Sklar, "Political Science and National Integration," Journal of Modern African Studies, V, 1 (1967); M. Staniland, "The Rhetoric of Centre-Periphery Relations," Journal of Modern African Studies, VIII, 4 (1970); M. J. Swartz (Ed.), Local-level Politics (1969); A. Zolberg, Creating Political Order (1966) and "The Structure of Political Conflict in the New States of Tropical Africa," American Political Science Review, LXII, 1 (1968)

differences. A political scientist finds that sort of statement difficult to accept without further investigation; hence the in-depth study of Councillors' behaviour which follows later in this work. Moreover the - for a one-party dominant system - relatively strong position of Opposition parties in local government, and the fact that the boundaries of most of the District Councils followed ethnic lines, seemed to provide a good laboratory for studying the interaction of these two factors.

The relevance of rural development as a subject for study by now needs little justification. Hence the study of the political process as it affected the lives of the rural populace was undertaken with particular reference to the question of "development", with particular concentration on the self-help or Ipelegeng principle. Moreover should it turn out that there were in fact no, or few, significant inter-party cleavages it would still be possible to produce some worthwhile findings about District Council politics, and the politics of the districts in question. Hence the focus on the decision-making process with particular reference to the allocation of resources.

The attention directed to centre-periphery relations by a number of writers ties in neatly with the rhetoric of the Botswana Government, which made increasingly frequent and explicit reference to what may be termed the "chain of democracy" or "pyramid" of democratic and planning institutions,¹ and urged Members of Parliament

1 See speeches by the Vice-President in Hansard, 45, p. 113 (29 MAY 73) and No. 27, p. 45 (18 MAR 69)

in particular to be active two-way communicators with the District Councils, the Village Development Committees and the people.¹

Thus the study encompasses Deutsch's horizontal and vertical planes of communications and tests the official position against the reality. In particular the concept of the middleman or broker² is examined in the context of Botswana. The conditions for the playing of a middleman role would appear to be favourable, since discontinuities in communication - or in the vivid phrase of one writer "the prevalence of muddle"³ - are readily apparent. It can be put conversely: "Perfect communication will mean that the middleman is out of a job,"⁴ since brokers "transmit, direct, filter, receive, code, decode and interpret messages."⁵ The distinction between middlemen and "patrons"⁶ is also explored, particularly in Chapter 6.

METHODS AND SOURCES

To narrow the field to manageable proportions a sample of three District Councils was selected (after a tour of the whole country), In the end the districts chosen were the Central District, by far the largest and the political base of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party; the North East District, a stronghold of the Opposition Botswana People's Party and the centre of the most significant minority tribe; and the Southern District, which made an abrupt transition in 1969 from being 100% BDP to dividing roughly equally between the BDP and the more recently formed Botswana National Front. In geographical terms the sample thus included a spread of

1 Ibid.

2 For a critique see Staniland, op. cit.

3 S. J. Tennent, Report on Community Development (1974), p. 20

4 Bailey, op. cit., p. 169

5 J. Boissevain, "The Place of Non-Groups in the Social Sciences," Man, III, 4 (1968), p. 549

6 See Staniland, op. cit., for a discussion of this.

Councils in the Eastern part of Botswana where 80% of the population live. In party terms, three out of Botswana's four parties were represented, while the sample included two major Tswana clans and one minor one, as well as the Kalangas of the North East.

Within each district a group of three villages was selected. The selection was to some extent arbitrary but included villages supporting both BDP and the two Opposition parties; most were around the 1,000 population mark but one was a considerably bigger "large village". In all cases a necessary condition was the availability of Village Development Committee records.

Thus although it cannot be claimed on any scientific grounds that all the findings about the three districts and nine villages necessarily apply to the whole of rural Botswana at least the more obvious danger of generalising from the particular should have been avoided; a further check was the less structured information about other areas derived from a variety of sources including the Botswana Daily News.

Three methods of conducting research were employed, deriving from the strong conviction that concentration on only one method, in a polity like Botswana, runs the very real hazard of egregious error - error which can be readily detected by informed Batswana, however plausible arguments may appear to outside observers. Thus reliance on interviews¹ alone risks the uncritical acceptance of recollections and interpretations which may be no less inaccurate for being honest. Interviews were conducted on an open-ended and multiple basis, since

1 Vengroff is right to warn that "The greatest apparent weakness of much analysis of local level politics in Africa is the heavy reliance on highly impressionistic data." R. Vengroff, "Networks and Leadership in a Development Institution: the District Council in Botswana," Political Anthropology, I, 2 (JUL 75), p. 170

it was necessary in the first place to be flexible: what the researcher assumes to be important may turn out to be secondary to other factors.

As Ranger has put it:

to grasp the reality . . . was not an easy or straight-forward thing to do, and . . . illuminations often came from very unexpected sources and from following up interests which at first sight seemed peripheral.¹

Secondly the desirability of multiple interviews arises not only from the need to cross-check but also from the importance of establishing a basis of rapport and trust between researcher and interviewee. It is for this reason that it was made plain to respondents that information given would be treated in confidence and not attributed to individuals, who obviously would have been inhibited had they known that statements made by them would subsequently be attributed to them in writing.² Accordingly it is only very rarely in the course of this work that an interview source is given. Nevertheless it should be recorded that the writer was well placed over a period of several years of residence in Gaborone to collect information and views not only in Gaborone and on field trips but from visitors from the districts to the capital, and this became cumulatively more valuable as a composite picture was built up.

Interviewing was supplemented by attendance at meetings of the National Assembly, the House of Chiefs, District Councils, District Development Committees and a variety of conferences, seminars and training sessions. In the villages (each of which was visited more than once) Village Development Committee and other leaders were interviewed and one or two kgotla meetings attended (see Appendix "C").

1 T. O. Ranger, Dance and Society in Eastern Africa (1975), p. vii. Three subjects can be mentioned as warranting future research by political scientists: football, drink and religion.

2 For a useful summary of this methodological problem see W. Foltz, From French West Africa to Mali Federation (1965), p. viii.

The necessary assistance of interpreters was invariably forthcoming. As well as assisting in acquiring a general "feel" for the institutions studied, participant observation made it possible to check the records of meetings for reliability against personal notes and it is important to note that the degree of accuracy was high.

This is important when one considers the third source of information, and by far the most neglected as far as local political institutions are concerned, namely written records. In 1967 an official complained that

The Council minutes I have seen appear to be in the nature of a junior Hansard with verbatim reporting. Perhaps you could talk to the Council Secretary about this and see if an improvement could be effected.¹

Luckily for the researcher the position had not altered by the time Chambers and Feldman conducted their study in 1972, since they remarked that "the blow by blow accounts in some minutes make fascinating reading."² Accordingly reference is frequently made to these voluminous Council minutes as well as those of District Development Committees, Village Development Committees,³ etc, the verbatim record contained in Hansard and the equivalent Official Report of the House of Chiefs. The Daily News, while giving fair space to Opposition politicians (particularly MPs) and good coverage of Ministerial speeches, is an unreliable source of district news. This is not because of deliberate bias but a reflection of the sporadic way in which the Government's Information Assistants send in reports to Gaborone. Incidentally, one advantage arising from the shortage of

1 Permanent Secretary, MLG&L, to District Commissioner, Kanye, 4 SEP 67

2 Chambers & Feldman, Report on Rural Development (1973), p. 211

3 The style and length of VDC minutes varies greatly but in most cases recorded the main contributions to meetings and not just decisions.

staff in the Department of Information is that the Radio Botswana news is virtually an oral version of the Daily News. Apart from the Daily News the only newspaper is the weekly Mafeking Mail & Botswana Guardian,¹ two local weekly newspapers² having foundered after a few years' activity; the same is true of the party press, discussed below.³ The Department of Information's monthly magazine Kutlwano has occasional articles of political interest; its impartiality was established, paradoxically, after a pre-election pro-BDP editorial led to a public reprimand for the Editor by the Government.⁴

The final point to make with regard to the reliability of data concerns elections, statistics from which recur throughout the dissertation. It is important to acknowledge the fundamental fact that elections to date have been fair and free, and been seen to be so. Moreover the prerequisites of meaningful free elections have been forthcoming in a relatively genuine and generous spirit. These underpinnings of democracy include freedom of speech (including Opposition party political broadcasting at election times and fair coverage by the Botswana Daily News and Radio Botswana) and assembly and a generally relaxed and tolerant ethos⁵ which owes much to the liberal strand in the BDP⁶ but is equally an expression of that

1 Formerly the Mafeking Mail & Protectorate Guardian

2 Mmegi wa Dikgang (Serowe) and Puisano (Selebi-Phikwe)

3 In Chapter 7

4 See Hansard, 30, p. 329 (26 NOV 69)

5 See J. A. Wiseman, "Multipartyism in Africa: the case of Botswana," African Affairs, LXXVI, 302 (JAN 77), esp. p. 78

6 A more ambivalent attitude is exemplified by the following remarks made in the National Assembly by the Minister of Information & Broadcasting, E. M. K. Kgabo: "some members of the Opposition parties are just points of friction. They are really good for nothing. . . . It is only because we are terribly democratic that we keep them and we feel we should continue to have those Opposition parties. And my advice to them would be to be educated to know what is expected of them, namely to offer alternative policies." Hansard, 45, pp. 144-145 (30 MAY 73). See also Appendix A below.

elusive but fundamental factor, the political culture¹ of the Batswana. Rooted in the customs of the kgotla, the council which lies at the heart of the clan system, this tradition has found a modern equivalent in the "Freedom Squares" where party political meetings are held. It is not for nothing that Government spokesmen are fond of boasting that there are no political refugees from Botswana.

To sum up: the paucity of secondary material in Botswana (slowly being rectified) is balanced by the availability of good primary documents which have been neglected hitherto. The exhaustive analysis of this written material has however been supplemented in this study by participant observation and by the extensive interviewing so essential for an understanding of a small nation such as Botswana where the personal interaction of members of the political and administrative élite plays an important part.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

One characteristic of Botswana which is very welcome to social scientists is the impressive volume and quality of statistics readily available in a variety of Government publications.² What is essayed here then is but a brief outline of the most salient aspects of the ecology of the political system.³

Recent events in southern and central Africa have publicised the strategic importance of Botswana, wedged between South Africa,

1 See J. D. Parson, "Aspects of Political Culture in Botswana, " in Cohen & Parson (Eds.), Politics and Society in Botswana (1976)

2 Notably successive National Development Plans; the Report on the Population Census 1971 (1972); the Rural Income Distribution Survey 1974/75 (1976); and the Guide to the Villages of Botswana (1973). Another useful source, despite its obtrusive editorial bias, is P. Smit, Botswana: Resources and Development (1970)

3 A readable introduction to the political ecology can be found in P. J. Rollings, An introduction to Botswana (1974)

Namibia and Rhodesia but with the tiny Zambezi/Chobe river boundary with Zambia providing a vital outlet to the "Free North". In size Botswana is impressive, at 220,000 square miles (518,000 square kilometres) comparing with France and Kenya, but with a very small population of 660,000. The crude population density of 3 per square mile (1.3 per square kilometre) is however very misleading: the Kalahari (or Kgalagadi) Desert dominates the country, and four-fifths of the population live in a somewhat better watered belt along the eastern border.¹ Thus it happens that the bulk of the population live within easy reach of the railway line which is a reminder of the raison d'être of the Bechuanaland Protectorate:² a railway corridor to link Rhodes's central and southern African interests, forming an essential part of the Cape-to-Cairo imperial dream.

Demographic features

The population of Botswana possesses a number of features³ characteristic of the third world: predominantly young (46% under the age of 15, only 10% over 55), fast growing (at an estimated annual rate of natural increase of 3.1%). It is predominantly rural, more than half the people being resident in small villages and the less permanent settlements known as "lands" dwellings (i.e. at the arable fields) or cattleposts, some distance from the nucleated Tswana⁴ villages. Figures 1.1 to 1.3 illustrate.

1 For a delimitation of "Eastern Botswana" see Smit, op. cit., p. 53.

2 See Sillery, Founding a Protectorate, (1965)

3 Unless otherwise indicated, the illustrations in this section are taken from Census 1971, the popular version of the Census, and the basic data from the Report on the Population Census of 1971 (op. cit.)

4 The Tswana pattern is not universal, the non-Tswana speaking minority tribes, such as the Kalangas and Basarwa, being distributed very differently

FIGURE 1.1
AGE-SEX PYRAMID

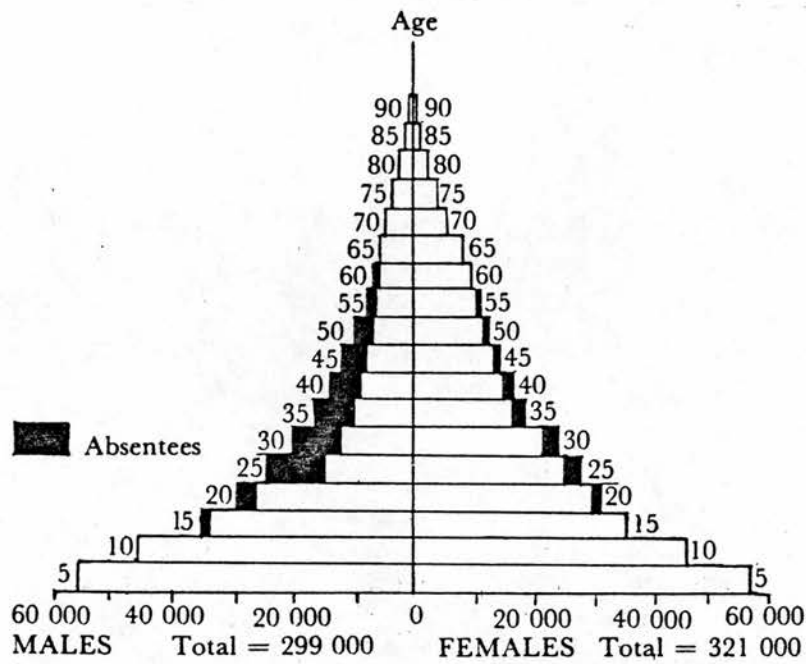


FIGURE 1.2
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION
BY TYPE OF LOCALITY

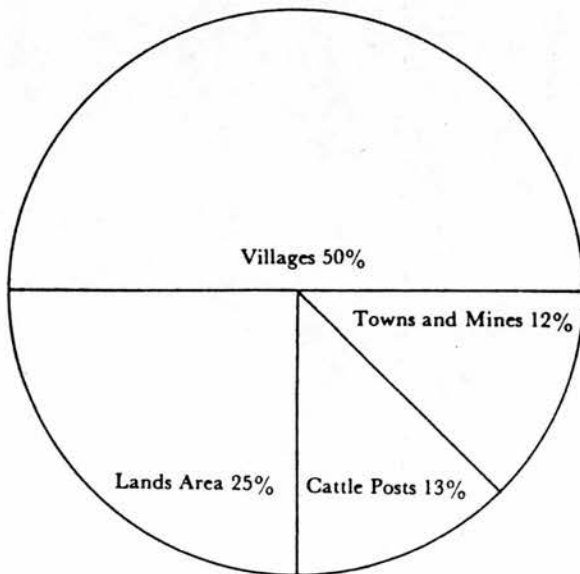
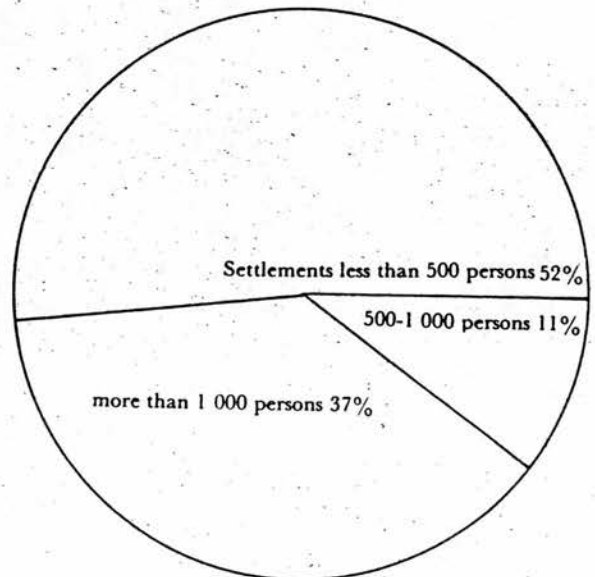


FIGURE 1.3
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION
BY SIZE OF SETTLEMENT



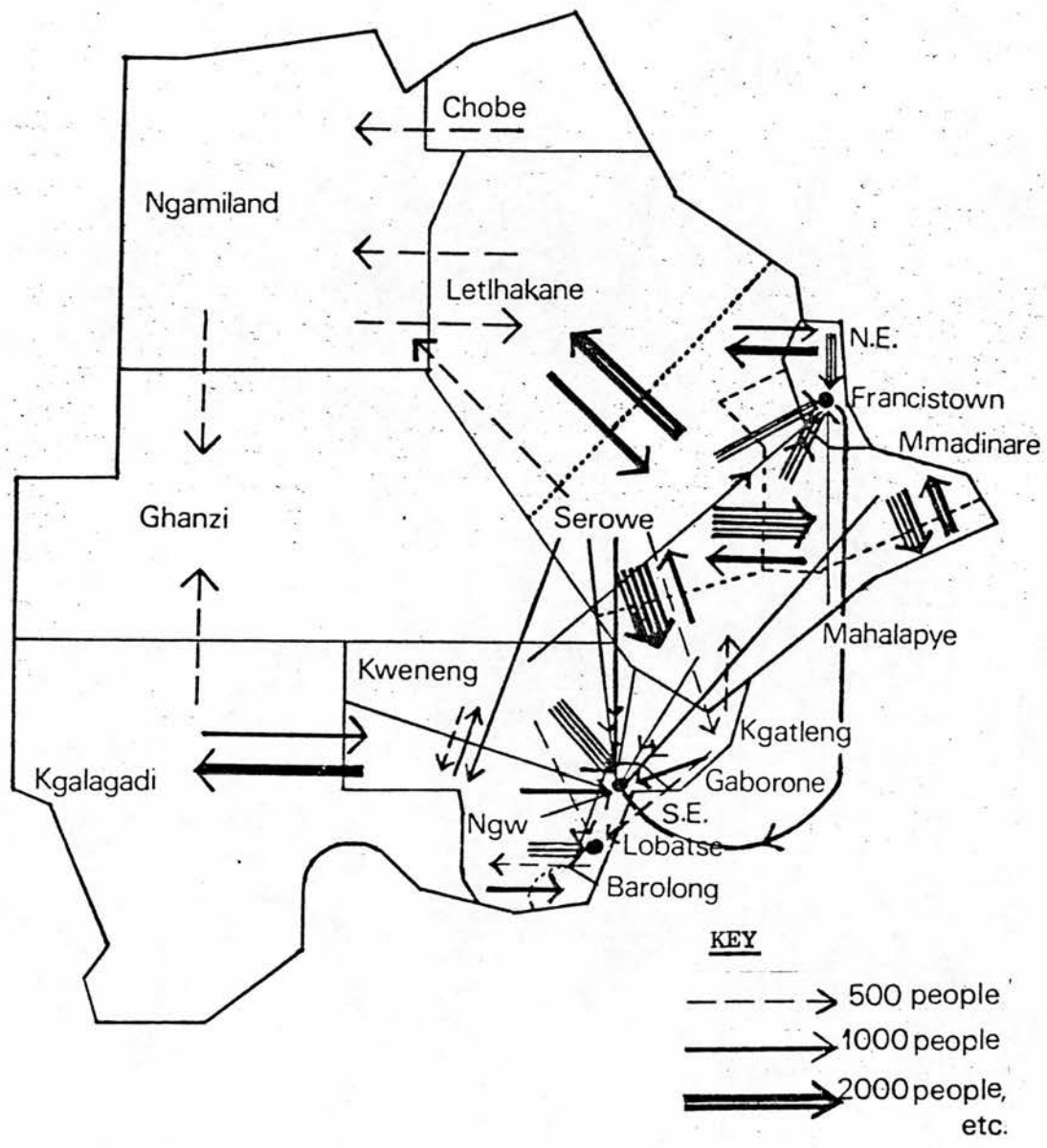
Migration has for so long been a feature of Botswana that it has almost ceased to have any dynamic connotation, being regarded as a fact of life. This is due in part to the nature of the two types of traditional migration - one the seasonal agricultural pattern characteristic of the Tswana, the other the near universal search for cash employment in South Africa. For a long time the assumption has been that the migration was temporary, the migrant returning to his/her place of origin (home village) at the end of it. But in recent times the migration of population within Botswana has had a more lasting character, and has led to the growth of the four urban centres and the "lands", at the expense in particular of the Tswana clan capitals. The map (Figure 1.4) below gives some indication of the scale of this migration: as Census 1971 puts it, "there must have been massive internal migrations within the last twenty or thirty years."¹

The Batswana nation is on the move in other ways too. A good indicator of this is the proportion of people who have received formal education, which correlates (albeit in a rather imprecise way) with literacy. The national statistic of 68% with no education conceals the contrast between the 89% figure for the over-55s and that of 58% for those aged 25-39; roughly half the children of school age are reckoned to be attending or have attended school. Figures 1.5 and 1.6 bring out these features.

Between them, the distribution of population and the literacy rate indicate two major problems of communication, which is at the heart of understanding the political process. But since the advent of the radio has opened up the possibility of more direct communication

1 Census 1971, (op. cit.), fourth page

FIGURE 1.4
INTERNAL MIGRATION



Arrows point from the
census district
containing peoples'
village of allegiance, to
the census district
where they were
enumerated.

from Government to governed,¹ two other factors, apart from the logistical problems of transmission, need to be considered. The first is language. Although Botswana is not as unified linguistically as its sister countries Lesotho and Swaziland, nevertheless the Setswana language is spoken and understood by something over 80% of the population.² The Government's resistance to repeated attempts to have Kalanga broadcast is due basically to its belief in the advantages of the lingua franca as a politically unifying factor.³ More will be said about the communal structure of Botswana's society below.

FIGURE 1.5

EDUCATION: the 25-39 age group

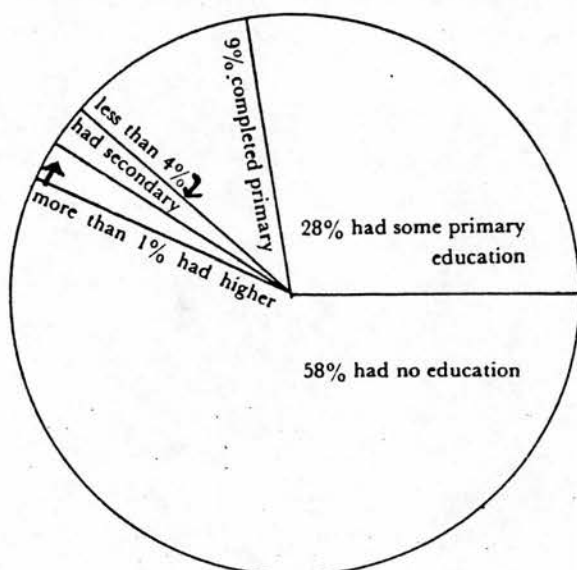
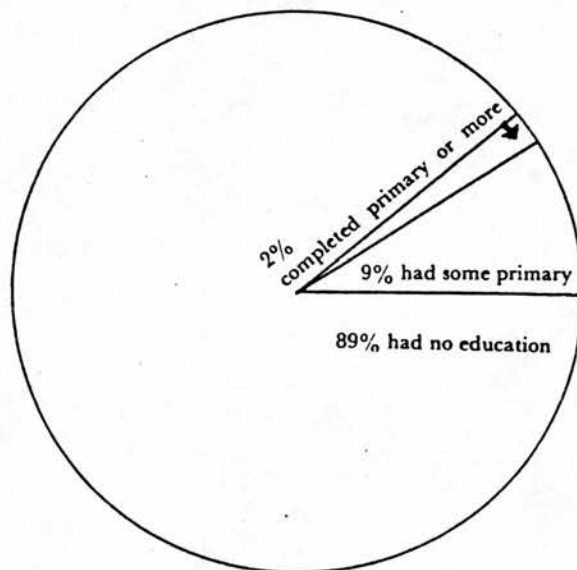


FIGURE 1.6

EDUCATION: the 55+ age group



1 Two recent mass Radio Learning Campaigns have been mounted with considerable success, not least in the mass response from listening groups. See Colclough & Crowley, The People and the Plan (3 Vols) (1974 and forthcoming), especially Vol. III by M. Colclough: An Analysis of Participant Feedback (forthcoming)

2 Since there were no questions in the 1971 census on language or on ethnic affiliation the figure is a guesstimate. See I. Schapera, The Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes (1952).

3 The official line is that the number of minority languages, each spoken by small numbers, does not warrant the expense of arranging for their use in transmission. The policy has been the subject of Parliamentary debate since the Legislative Assembly was established in 1965: see Hansard, 14, pp. 148 ff. (13-14 JUL 65)

Economic factors

The other relevant factor concerning the Government's use of Radio Botswana is economic: the cost of a radio is beyond many families. The recent Rural Income Distribution Survey found that one-quarter of a small pilot survey (946 questionnaires returned) of households had a radio set in working order and that a very high proportion of those listened to Radio Botswana (virtually to the exclusion of anything else).¹ The same survey gave a median annual income per household of R630, the mean being R1,068. This survey also revealed the extent of rural poverty (45% below the rural poverty datum line) and the skew distribution of income: the top 10% had incomes of over R2,094 while the bottom 10% had less than R233; three-quarters of rural households were below the mean.²

These stark figures on the rural standard of living have to be borne in mind and set against the much more widely known facts of Botswana's rags-to-riches story in terms of central Government revenues,³ and the remarkable figure of economic growth in the early seventies of 15% to 18% in real terms.⁴

Table 1.7⁵ gives the statistics of Government recurrent expenditure and development expenditure from Independence to date.

1 The Rural Income Distribution Survey in Botswana 1974/75, op. cit. pp. 267-270.

2 Figures all from ibid. pp. (vi), (vii). The "Gini coefficient", a measure of how much income is concentrated, was 52%.

3 For a convenient summary see R. W. Tomlinson "Botswana - from Dust to Diamonds," Geography, LX, 4 (1975).

4 See E. P. Morgan, "Botswana: democratic politics and development" in Carter & O'Meara (Eds.), Southern African in Crisis (1977)

5 Source: H. Dahl, "Tables Describing the Nature and Characteristics of the Society and Economy of Botswana," in Cohen & Parson (Eds.), Politics and Society in Botswana (1976), pp. 288-291

TABLE 1.7

GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE (R million)

	1966 /67	1967 /68	1968 /69	1969 /70	1970 /71	1971 /72	1972 /73	1973 /74	1974 /75	1975 /76*	1976 /77**
Total Domestic Recurrent Rev.	6.1	5.7	6.8	10.6	11.4	17.1	26.9	40.7	60.7	72.7	64.4
Total Recurrent Expenditure	10.3	15.0	12.0	13.2	14.9	18.1	21.0	26.5	38.3	46.6	57.2
Recur. Domestic Surplus/Deficit	-4.2	-9.3	-5.2	-1.8	-3.5	-1.0	5.9	14.2	22.4	26.1	7.2
Total Dev. Expenditure	3.7	3.8	3.3	4.9	8.5	12.3	29.9	30.3	32.8	33.1	56.3

* Preliminary figures

** Estimates

The Botswana Government has thus acquired considerable financial resources, which, it has been suggested, have allowed it to spend its way out of political trouble,¹ or rather potential political trouble since the ruling party has benefited from the inept Opposition challenge (of which more anon) and the fact that expectations were in any case relatively low. The unsolved economic problems are twofold: the creation of cash employment for an ever-growing domestic labour force,² and the controlled development of agriculture, especially animal husbandry, so as to conserve the fertility of the land and also redistribute it in a more egalitarian way. The magnitude of the task is illustrated by figures 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10 which indicate the relative importance of various sources of income and employment.

1 Speed & Stevens, "Multipartism in Africa: the case of Botswana Revisited," African Affairs, LXXVI, 304 (JUL 77) p. 386.

2 Estimated at 385,000 in 1971, Census 1971, op. cit., fifth page.

FIGURE 1.8

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: MEN

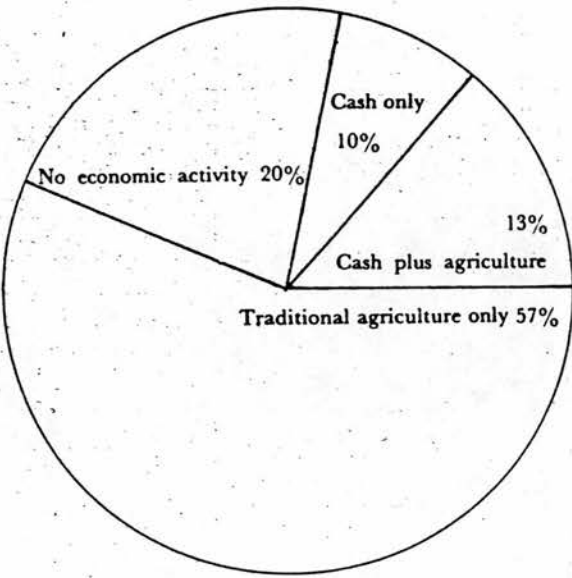


FIGURE 1.9

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: WOMEN

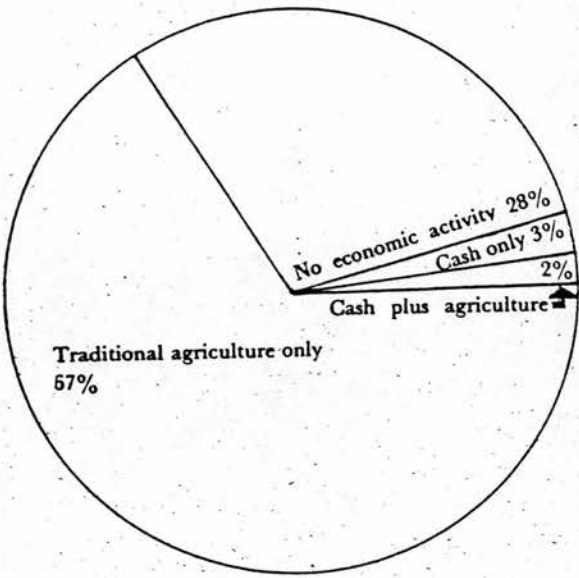
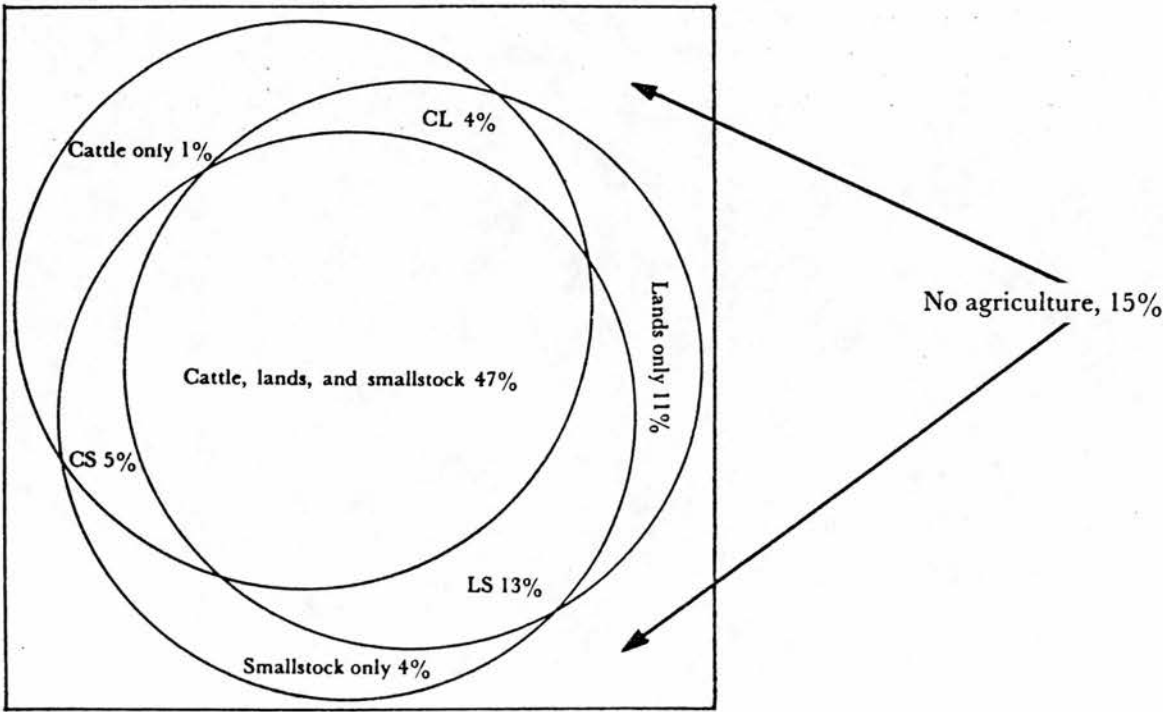


FIGURE 1.10

TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS



CS = Cattle and smallstock, no lands
CL = Cattle and lands, no smallstock
LS = Lands and smallstock, no cattle
Total number of agricultural holdings = 64 000

The lack of wage employment within the country is the major reason for the regular migration of Batswana men - about a quarter of the adult male labour force - for short-term contract work in South Africa, and exemplifies an aspect of the dilemma concerning the South African connexion.¹ On the one hand the income is vital for 50,000 families; but their interest in retaining access to the neighbouring state is a political factor enabling South Africa to exert tacit pressure on Botswana.² The question of how to deal with this relationship, and the general dependency syndrome of which it is part, is capable of varying answers, as the contrasting policies pursued by Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland show.³ Another aspect of the syndrome is the Customs and Monetary Union. Here Botswana has benefited from the renegotiation of the former (leading to a substantial increase in revenue accruing to Botswana)⁴ but has deemed it worthwhile to break away from the latter and establish a new, independent currency, the Pula. The price Botswana has to pay in exchange for an increasingly independent line - strict neutrality⁵ in the civil wars (actual or incipient) in Rhodesia and South Africa - is in reality little hardship, since the vulnerability of Botswana to any armed forces makes the presence on its soil of military bases of any kind a distasteful alternative.

1 Botswana's relations with South Africa have attracted much outside attention, from the early Independence Day articles such as P. Giniewski, "Deux nouvelles indépendances africaines: Lesotho et Botswana," Politique étrangère, XXXI, 4 (1966) to the detailed work of Richard Dale, as in his Botswana and its Southern neighbor (1970).

2 For an earlier example of rather more overt use of the economic weapon see S. Ettinger, "South Africa's Weight Restrictions on Cattle Exports from Bechuanaland, 1924-1941," BN&R, IV (1972).

3 For an analysis of the contrasting approaches of Botswana and Lesotho see L. P. Frank, "Khama and Jonathan: a study of authority and leadership in Southern Africa" (1974).

4 See P. M. Landell-Mills, "The 1969 Southern African Customs Union Agreement," Journal of Modern African Studies, IX, 2 (1971)

5 As opposed to neutralism. See P. Lyon, Neutralism (1967), pp. 17-18

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND¹

The South African connexion is one factor in accounting for the development of political parties in Botswana, as will be seen; the other major influence was the policies pursued by the British administration, which, it must be remembered, had been invited into Bechuanaland to protect the Batswana against the more pressing danger of Afrikaner imperialism.² After the fading of the original British idea of transferring Bechuanaland to South Africa³ and the consequent abandonment, in effect, of the peculiar "dual interest" system of administration reflected in the title "High Commission Territories," the decision to decolonise virtually invited the formation of political parties to compete for the power that was, on past experience, highly likely to be transferred to any party which could demonstrate popular support at the polls.⁴ Disregarding the ephemeral and conservative Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party and the even less substantial Liberal Party, the first serious party to be founded was the Bechuanaland People's Party, which fits into the mainstream of Pan-Africanist, nationalist parties, and had close parallels in the earlier-established Basutoland

1 Principal written sources: R. P. Stevens, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland (1966); J. Halpern, South Africa's Hostages (1965); B. A. Young, Bechuanaland (1966); S. M. Gabatshwane, Seretse Khama and Botswana (1966); R. H. Edwards, "Political and Constitutional Change in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," in Butler and Castagno, Boston University Papers on Africa: transition in African politics (1967); A. Sillery, Botswana: a short political history (1974); E. S. Munger, Bechuanaland: Pan-African outpost or Bantu homeland? (1965).

2 See S. M. Gabatshwane, Introduction to the Bechuanaland Protectorate History and Administration (1957) Ch. 4; A. Sillery, The Bechuanaland Protectorate (1952) Part I and Founding a Protectorate (1965).

3 For the most detailed account of this question see J. E. Spence, "British Policy Towards the High Commission Territories," Journal of Modern African Studies, II, 2 (1964). See also Hailey, The Republic of South Africa and the High Commission Territories (1963)

4 Of the people of the three High Commission Territories, only the Basotho had organised parties before there was any prospect of general elections. See Stevens, op. cit., Ch. 4 and Halpern, op. cit., Chs. 7 and 8.

Congress Party and the Swaziland Progressive Party. Unfortunately for the BPP it - like its counterparts - faced two threats which were to prove fatal to its chances of ever forming a government. The first of these was the internal stress which arose (partly on grounds of personality) between the intellectual founder of the party, the late K. T. Motsete, his demagogic lieutenant, F. G. Matante and the more ideological Secretary-General Motsamai Mpho. Over a period of three years the party split three ways. Mpho eventually renamed his faction the Botswana Independence Party, leaving the Matante faction in possession of the name Bechuanaland People's Party, while Motsete's following dwindled rapidly until it had become a one-candidate "BPP-Motsete" in the 1965 General Election. Apart from irreconcilable personality clashes, exacerbated by the vexed question of money and vehicles from Accra, the BPP-BIP split reflected the deep division in South Africa between the Pan-African Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC) - which was hardly surprising in the light of the South African political apprenticeship which Mpho and Matante, and many other BPP activists, had served in the 1950s.

The BPP leaders - all commoners - were able to mobilise unprecedented support in the two "modern" towns¹ of the Protectorate, Francistown and Lobatse, in particular organising demonstrations in favour of universal franchise to replace the racially-based reforms of 1960/61 and against the racial discrimination blatantly practised by European traders and farmers. It was not long before the 1960/61 constitution, featuring the familiar colonial Executive Council (ExCo) and Legislative Council (LegCo), multi-racial but with separate electorates, was being urgently reviewed by the colonial régime.

1 In Setswana, ditôrôpô

As the BPP held the initiative it rapidly became clear that the threat it posed was felt even more acutely by the leading lights on the Legislative Council than by the British administration. Accordingly, the former¹ began to organise a political counterweight to the People's Party. Here the key figures of Seretse Khama and Quett Masire soon emerged and formed a formidable alliance² of traditional status and modernising approach.

By this time Seretse Khama was in an enviable position which was all the more remarkable when contrasted with the situation in which he found himself in the late 'forties and early 'fifties. The well-known and "very disreputable transaction" (as Churchill castigated it when in Opposition),³ whereby the British (Labour) Government tricked Seretse, heir to the most important traditional position in Bechuanaland, into leaving the Protectorate and then kept him in exile, made him a martyr in the eyes of the Batswana. The fact that his "crime" was that of marrying a white woman, a marriage criticised by white Rhodesian and South African politicians, made him a hero in the eyes of liberals everywhere. Seretse's renunciation of his claim to the Chieftainship of the Bangwato meant little in terms of his traditional status but left him free to engage in open politics after his return from abroad. Furthermore his banishment gave him insights into British politics and many useful contacts. It is ironic that these benefits were all unintentionally conferred upon him by a British Government bowing to racialist pressure. Thus it became inevitable that Seretse would lead the conservative party which was founded to counter the rise of the BPP.

1 Eight of the fourteen founders of the BDP were LegCo members.

2 Edwards (*op. cit.*, pp. 151-156) describes the personalities particularly well.

3 See Halpern, *op. cit.*, Ch. 9; M. Benson, *Tshekedi Khama* (1960); and E. Robins, *White Queen in Africa: the story of Ruth and Seretse* (1967)

The label "conservative" although justified in terms of the contrast with the People's Party is misleading if taken too literally. The name "Democratic Party" reflected the liberal stand within the BDP leadership. In the Southern African context it relates particularly to Seretse's detestation of racial segregation and his faith in British-style liberal democracy.¹ To this day the two tendances - conservative and liberal - can be discerned within the BDP. The two converge over the question of bogosi - the chieftainship. Thus the powers of the Chiefs have been whittled down by a party which itself contains many members of the traditional ruling families (some of whom continue to exercise a function in both the traditional administration and the modern state). It is a combination which is as effective as it is daunting to its opponents to left and right.

The First General Election

At this point the discussion of the nature of the parties must be broken off to consider the decisive event of modern Batswana political history, the 1965 General Election. Owing to the telescoping of the timetable for Independence, this election was at one and the same time the first to be held under universal adult suffrage and the last before Independence. Its importance is reflected in the 75% turnout of voters and the number of candidates entered by the two sides. The BDP contested all 31 seats, the BPP 26, and the BIP 24. The result was a shattering defeat for the once-confident BPP, which emerged with only three seats to the Democratic Party's 28. Table 1.11 and Map No. 2 give the data.²

1 See Frank (op. cit.), passim, for a thorough analysis of this factor.

2 All maps (with the exception of Figure 1.4) appear in the prefatory section.

TABLE 1.11

THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION OF 1 MARCH 65

	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BPP*</u>	<u>BIP</u>	<u>Others**</u>	<u>Total</u>
Seats won	28	3	-	-	31
Share of votes	80.4%	14.2%	4.6%	0.8%	100%
Candidates	31	26	24	2	83

* BPP-Matante

** BPP-Motsete and Independent

With 80.4% of the votes cast in its favour, the BDP appeared then - as now - in an impregnable electoral position. Yet the heady confidence of March 1965 was to be shaken more than once in the five years that followed - five years of poverty, it must be recalled, a fact which is in danger of being forgotten from the perspective of the Wirtschaftswunder of the '70s. The first blow to fall was the Ngami by-election in September 1965: although the BDP managed to hold on to the seat, it did so with a minority of the votes and saw its vote fall from 2054 to 667 in the face of a strong BIP challenge.¹ What worried the BDP was that Ngami was one of its apparently safest seats in the 1965 General Election.

Accordingly the local government elections of June 1966 (three months before Independence) were an event of national importance, both as a national political barometer and as setting the scene in the local political arenas, both town and district. In the event the BDP had an easy ride, facing opposition in only 82 of the 166 seats at

1 Ngami results:-

	<u>By-election SEP 65</u>		<u>General Election MAR 65</u>	
	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Share of poll</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Share of poll</u>
BDP	667	49.2%	2,054	97.4%
BIP	636	46.9%	--	--
BPP	53	3.9%	54	2.6%
<u>BDP Maj.</u>	31	2.3%	2,000	94.9%

Source: Mafeking Mail & Protectorate Guardian, 1 OCT 65

stake, since the losing party in 1965 was disinclined in many areas to risk a repetition of defeat. The BDP ended up with elected majorities in all but two of the twelve Councils, and significant opposition in only two more. Moreover the newly founded opposition Botswana National Front did badly in the seven contests it entered.

The Botswana National Front

Nevertheless it was the Front which was to cause the ruling party the most anxiety. The BNF had its origins in the attempt to forge a "United Front" of Opposition parties, a move led by the romantic Leninist Dr Kenneth Koma, an original adherent of the BIP. Perhaps "naïve Machiavellian" would be a more apt description of Dr Koma, since the celebrated Pamphlet No 1 of the BNF, which he drafted, contained the much quoted dictum, underlined in this passage:

. . . the shifts and turns in our tactical readjustments should be dictated by our strategy and our objective. We must not be afraid of temporary alliance even with groups which it is our ultimate patriotic duty to annihilate Making alliance with some elements from the corrupt section of the bourgeoisie or from traditional feudals at specific period for a specific purpose does not change the fact that we mean to paralyse, if not oppose resolutely all the agents of colonialism.¹

While the effect on the BPP and BIP was to scare them away from any alliance with Koma, the Marxist language of the Front alarmed the BDP, which produced an anti-BNF pamphlet, basically a critique of BNF Pamphlet No 1, entitled "Beware of wolves in sheepskins."² More was to follow, in the form of a prosecution on sedition charges against five office-bearers of the BNF.³ The charges arose in part

1 BNF, Pamphlet No 1: the Botswana National Front, its character and tasks (n.d.), p. 24

2 Full title: Beware of wolves in sheepskins/Maloma tsebe a Domkrag kgori e bonye mae lorapo ga e lo bone (n.d.)

3 Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 21 DEC 67; and the Mahalapye Court Charge Sheet (n.d.) (mimeographed and circulated subsequently); also BNF, Statement issued by the Central Committee of the Botswana National Front party in December, 1967, to the Botswana nation and to the peoples of the world.

from attacks on the "ruling white clique," appearing in the Party organ Puo Phaa [Straight Talk], which was effectively banned as the Party's reprographic equipment was impounded. Although the charges were eventually dropped, the psychological effects lingered on and Puo Phaa never resumed regular publication.

The Puo Phaa case, while making difficulties for the Front, did nothing to stop its visible progress in the towns of Lobatse and Gaborone, where it appealed to the unemployed, the young and the lower ranks of the civil service. It seemed very likely that it would win the two Parliamentary seats containing these two towns as well as a majority of the Town Council seats. What was much less clear was the extent of its impact on the districts. One or two facts indicated localised strength - the presence of Dr Koma in Mahalapye (Central District), evidence of a serious attempt to contest all seats on the Kweneng District Council (to the alarm of the Minister of Local Government & Lands, E. M. K. Kgabo, a Mokwena),¹ and the attraction of the BNF for individual politicians from the other two Opposition parties.² The active leadership³ as President of D. K. Kwele,⁴ a Kalanga, gave many observers the idea that the Kalanga base of support for the People's Party in the northern Central District and the North East might switch to the BNF from the atrophying BPP. The fact that

1 See Vengroff, "Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana" (1972), passim, for a discussion of the rivalry between BDP and BNF in this district.

2 For details see Macartney, "The General Election of 1969," Botswana Notes and Records, III (1971).

3 Kwele undertook extensive speaking tours for the party. See for example BDN, 7 JUL 67, 9 APR 69, 25 APR 69, 23 JUN 69.

4 For his later role of North East District Council Secretary see Chapter 5 below, especially pp. 216-219.

Kwele was a Kalanga also had repercussions on the so-called "Kalanga scare."¹

These calculations about the likely impact of the BNF were thrown into confusion by the sudden announcement that the veteran Chief Bathoen II of the Bangwaketse - the longest-serving Chief of one of the three largest clans in Botswana - had joined the Front and indeed would be the Presidential candidate² in the elections due by March 1970. The effects of this move were incalculable owing to the wide gulf of outlook which existed between the Chief and the left wing of the party personified by Dr Koma. At one extreme of speculation, the BNF would put together a winning coalition of urban discontent and rural traditionalism; at the other, it would fall neatly and heavily between two stools. At any event a mood of great uncertainty gripped politicians, not least those in the Cabinet.

In the circumstances President Khama decided to call a snap General Election (Parliamentary and Local Government, since both were

1 An explanation must be given of the strange episode known as the "Kalanga coup scare," which in its impact on the election resembled the Zinoviev letter in the UK in 1923. Rumours circulated wildly that a group of Kalanga-speakers - who were over-represented in the civil service thanks to their relatively greater thirst for education - were plotting to overthrow the Government and that the police had seized a cache of some rifles. One result was the abrupt cancellation of plans to appoint Richard Mannathoko (a Kalanga) to London as High Commissioner; instead he became Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government & Lands. The facts behind the case remain obscure (see Hansard, 29, pp. 100, 126 [15 AUG 69]) but it was certainly a bonus for the BDP, as leading members, like M. P. K. Nwako, were quick to realise the advantage of a Tswana backlash, since Setswana-speakers were such an overwhelming proportion of the electorate. The fact that Kwele was a Kalanga was then used against the BNF; the BPP was already identified with the Kalanga language cause. Possibly Bathoen's nomination as Presidential candidate instead of Kwele was the BNF's attempt to contain the damage. (See Therisanyo/Consultation, VII, 11 [NOV 69] and VIII, 4 [JUN 70].)

2 The Front announced that, if they won the election, Bathoen would become a ceremonial President while Kwele would be made Prime Minister. (This would really have entailed a Constitutional amendment.) BDN, 14 OCT 69

now synchronised)¹ to try and minimise the chances for the BNF, clearly the main threat to his position, to organise.

This move may have been tactically wise but strategically it is open to question since 1969 represented the lowest point in the electoral fortunes of the BDP: from mid-1970 onwards its position steadily strengthened, as two factors came into play. One was the serious splits in and defections from the BNF, the other the steady growth in prosperity and the noticeable rise in government revenues.

The 1969 General Election

At the 1969 election² however the BDP lost four seats but held narrowly on to some of those at risk, notably Maun & Chobe in the North West, and the partly urban constituencies of Gaborone & Ramotswa and Lobatse/Barolong.

TABLE 1.12

THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION OF 18 OCTOBER 69

	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BIP</u>	<u>BNF</u>	<u>BPP</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
Seats won	24	1	3	3	-	31
Gain/loss from '65	-4	+1	(+3)	-	-	-
Share of votes	68.6%	6.0%	13.5%	11.9%	-	100%
Gain/loss from '65	-11.8	+1.4	(+13.5)	-2.3	(-0.8)	-
Candidates	31	9	21	15	0	76

The biggest blow was Vice-President Masire's heavy defeat at the hands of ex-Chief Bathoen in Kanye South, and the BDP's loss of two other Bangwaketse seats. It was these Southern District results, more than the victory of Mpho (a Moyei) in his Okavango home

1 The Local Council (Date of Election) Bill 1969 was strongly opposed by the Opposition BPP who accused the Government of running away from the verdict of the people by postponing the Local Government poll, due in June 1969. Hansard, 28, pp. 55 ff. (13 MAY 69)

2 See Macartney, "Botswana Goes to the Polls," Africa Report, XIV, 8 (DEC 69) [also XIV, 2 (FEB 71)].

constituency, which led the BDP to blame their losses on "tribalism".¹ Map No 3 shows the scatter of Opposition victories round the perimeter of the country.

The results of the local government elections of October 1969 were in some respects even more interesting than the parliamentary poll, since the BDP, despite its strong position nationally, ended up with elected majorities on only seven of the twelve Councils, and in three of these it faced a sizeable Opposition. To some extent thus it can be argued that the institution of local government universally provides a natural base for opposition to the national ruling party. But this tendency was accentuated by the peculiarities of district boundaries. Basing these on the traditional units of administration meant that the large Bangwato heartland of BDP support shows up (in Table 1.13) as only one Council, while each of the other Tswana clans either had a Council coterminous with its territory or in two cases (Southern and South East Districts) shared it with other small clans. (This is further discussed below.)²

TABLE 1.13
STRENGTH OF BDP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS
(3 Town and 9 District Councils)

	<u>MAJORITY</u>			<u>TIED RESULT</u>	<u>MINORITY</u>
	100%	Overwhelming	Narrow		
<u>1966</u>	4	4	2	0	2
<u>1969</u>	0	4	3	3	2

Nationally the BDP lost 24 Council seats to Opposition and Independent candidates, although retaining 112 (68%) - 46 of them unopposed.

¹ See "The 1969 Elections - a Postmortem," Therisanyo/Consultation VII, 11 (NOV 69) and Hansard, 30, pp. 398-413 (27 NOV 69)

² On pp. 35-36

These elections set the tone for the local Councils studied: the early dominance of the BDP coming under challenge, a challenge which could not be said conclusively to have faded until the verdict of the electorate was given in the 1974 elections,¹ summarised in Tables 1.14 and 1.15.

TABLE 1.14

THE PARLIAMENTARY GENERAL ELECTION OF 26 OCTOBER 74

	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BIP</u>	<u>BNF</u>	<u>BPP</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
Seats won	27	1	2	2	0	32
Share of votes	76.7%	4.8%	11.5%	6.5%	0.5%	100%
Candidates	32	6	14	8	3	63

TABLE 1.15

STRENGTH OF BDP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, OCTOBER 1974
(4 Town and 9 District Councils)

100%	<u>MAJORITY</u> Overwhelming	Narrow	<u>TIED RESULT</u>	<u>MINORITY</u>
6	4	2	0	1

The main points to be made about the results are the gain in the number of seats and share of the vote by the ruling party. The former is qualified by the fact that there were more seats at stake in toto, owing to Parliamentary redistribution of seats and, in Local Government,² to the emergence of an elected Town Council in the mining centre of Selebi-Phikwe. The share of the poll refers to a smaller number of votes cast due to fewer contests and a general drop in voter turnout.³

1 For full discussion see Macartney, "The Success of Seretse," Africa Report, XIX, 6 (1974); J. D. Parson, "A note on the 1974 General Election in Botswana," BN&R, VII (1975)

2 For further details of Local Government election results see pp. 399-400 below.

3 Discussed ibid.

Party Policies

So far the parties have been discussed primarily in terms of their reactions to each other, as this is arguably the Wesen of the parties in Botswana: they make more sense when seen in terms of their opponents.¹ There are of course official policy positions. In the early days these were to be found in the various party periodicals.² After they ceased publication the best source of information has been the debates in the National Assembly (since the 1969 General Election when all four parties gained representation). Election manifestoes have been sporadic in their appearance, only the BDP having produced one for the Local Government elections in 1966 as well as all three Parliamentary General Elections.³ The Opposition manifestoes before 1974 contained remarkably little by way of policies on rural development or local government, but concentrated on attacks on the Government's record, plus a list of desirable objectives. The BDP Manifestoes by contrast show the polish which one might expect of the Party's expatriate advisers and civil servants who wrote the drafts: the manifestoes display the unmistakable tenor of a confident ruling party - a confidence which has been justified by the three pillars of Domkrag⁴ rule, viz. growing prosperity, an increasingly independent foreign policy, and a generally inept Opposition challenge.

1 Attempts to portray them in terms of world ideological alignment are highly misleading. See "United Front Tactics in Africa," African Review, SEP 67.

2 See Chapter 7 for an account of them, and of other aspects of party organisation.

3 Copies of manifestoes of BDP, BNF and BPP are to be found in Macartney (Ed.), Readings in Boleswa Government (1971), Vol. I.

4 Domkrag is the widely-used nickname of the Democratic Party. How it originated is explained in the Editorial Notes which preface this dissertation.

The Government's policies are often expounded in the form of four unexceptionable national principles - Democracy, Development, Self-Reliance and Unity, summarised in what is sometimes called the fifth principle, Harmony (kagisano).¹ The opposition tradition does not dissent from these principles but remains critical of the BDP's commitment to them and its performance in general. The BDP General Secretary, Dr Masire, has explicitly stated the pragmatic basis of the Party: as he put it in Parliament, "the country has elected a Government which does not believe in doctrines but in the development of Botswana."²

The Nature of the Parties

When it comes to analysing the nature of the parties there is a familiar dichotomy between the party constitution and actual party behaviour.³ All four party constitutions⁴ fall within Hodgkin's category of "mass parties" of the "Labour-Party-type, branch-based, model."⁵ The real question is the extent to which the parties in reality are "mass" or "élite" (or "patron") parties. This question is not easy to answer.

On the Opposition side, the BPP and the BIP both aspire to the old Nkrumahist CPP ideals and organisation, with Mpho as BIP Leader making the more visible efforts to follow the late Dr Nkrumah's line.⁶ But both are handicapped by the lack of funds necessary to overcome the problems of communication in a large country with a small population and have

1 E.g., Hansard, 46, p. 54 (7 AUG 73) and Kagisano - a policy for harmony, (Presidential address, BDP Annual Conference, Francistown, 1 APR 72).

2 Hansard, 24, p. 542 (5 APR 68)

3 See T. Hodgkin, African Political Parties (1961), especially pp. 81-82.

4 With the exception of the BIP Constitution (q.v.) the constitutions of the parties of Botswana are reproduced in Macartney (Ed.), Readings in Boleswa Government, op. cit., Vol I

5 Hodgkin, op. cit., Ch. 4, especially pp. 68-75.

6 See M. K. Mpho, Open letter to the Secretary-General, Organisation of African Unity, 4 JUN 72.

had perforce to rely on their MPs and Councillors to a large extent. The BNF, although equally beset by the sheer logistical problems of organisation, is different in two respects. In the first place its organisation aspires to a greater degree of centralisation, with the Central Committee ostensibly given the key role. Secondly its leadership is divided with two groups: the urban-intellectual wing, and the aristocratic. The latter is symbolised by ex-Chief Bathoen, but it is worth noting also that the BNF's candidates elsewhere have on occasion included members of local ruling families, e.g. in 1969 in the Sebinas & Gweta and Bobirwa constituencies. Accordingly there is as yet uncertainty about the true nature of the BNF: are the chiefs and headmen simply being "used" by an unscrupulous mass party, or is the BNF really an élite/patron party led by local notables, some of whom are intellectuals? With the bulk of the BNF Councillors, as well as their MPs, drawn from Gangwaketse it is somewhat difficult to draw a firm conclusion, particularly since successive annual conferences have had unpredictable effects on the leadership struggle. The task of analysing the BNF is not made any easier by the fact that some ruling families in its southern base adhere to the Democratic Party and are opposed locally by ordinary farmers who adhere to the BNF. The class base which can just be discerned in the support for the parties in the Tati District is absent in other areas (except possibly the North West).

The problem of analysis is more important in the case of the BDP, and yet, despite Hodgkin's view that "the distinction [between "mass" and "élite" parties] is fundamental for an understanding of the character and behaviour of African Parties,"¹ it is a surprisingly difficult distinction to sustain. On the one hand some of its leaders have traditional

1 Hodgkin, op. cit., p. 68. Hodgkin's cogent analysis of course primarily concerned pre-independence parties. The interesting point is the extent to which, in multi-party democratic Botswana, the parties make sense in his categories.

status; most of them have wealth, typically in cattle and often business. Of those possessing traditional status, some hold positions in both the traditional and the "modern" spheres. MPs in particular jealously guard their leading position in the party's grassroots organisation but are not generally too concerned if the level of activity of the BDP "mass" organisation is low. The bulk of funds are raised from the wealthy. But discipline has been reasonably strong and membership cards are sold to all willing to join (with variations on a constituency basis). Above all there is every prospect that the future leadership of the BDP will derive its authority from its position within the party, not from any externally ascribed status, and there is a substantial body (almost certainly a large majority) of MPs, and others, within the party who now have a vested interest in preserving the BDP as the vehicle of power, which has thus cut itself free from the traditional forces which helped to launch the party in the first place. The question then is whether the BDP will become a "patron party" using not traditional status but the power of the state to retain support, or whether it will - as is the ambition of certain influential members of the party - not only retain the mass party ideal but expand and rejuvenate its grassroots activity. The outcome of the tension between these two tendances will prove a vital question for the future shape of politics in Botswana.

THE LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Historical Basis

Botswana is fortunate in the extensive studies which have been undertaken by anthropologists, notably the prolific Professor I. Schapera,¹

¹ See particularly a Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom (Second Edition, new impression, 1976) and Tribal Innovators: Tswana Chiefs and social change 1795-1940 (1970)

and by historians, of the traditional politico-administrative system.¹ The most important points to note about the system are, firstly, the importance for the Tswana of the eight merafe (clans), each of which was independent of the others, having no common Paramount Chief but sharing the Setswana language and the experience of British rule. The nearest thing to a supreme traditional authority was the collaboration of the Chiefs of the three largest clans, the Bangwato, Bakwena and Bangwaketse, to seek Queen Victoria's protection.² Once the desired Protectorate was in being (from 1885) the Chiefs continued to rule much as before,³ albeit with the gradual and sporadic extension of the power of the colonial government. Most writers characterise the period as one of standard and harmonious indirect rule.⁴ There were however periods of friction. One was caused by the Native Administration Proclamation and the Native Tribunals Proclamation, both of 1934, challenged unsuccessfully by two leading Chiefs Tshekedi Khama and Bathoen II as violations of their treaty rights, inherent in the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, insofar as the Proclamations interfered with tradition and derogated from the Chiefs' power. A more colourful row occurred in the Bangwato capital of Serowe which in 1933 received its first ever naval visit (Royal Navy sailors from Cape Town, complete with field guns) to back up the

1 See T. Tlou, "The Nature of Batswana States: towards a theory of Batswana traditional government - the Batawana case," BN&R, VI (1974), and Q. N. Parsons, "Khama III, the Bamangwato, and the British, with special reference to 1895-1923," (1973).

2 A. Sillery, The Bechuanaland Protectorate (1952) Part I, especially Ch 7, and his Botswana: a short political history (1974), Ch IX; for an eyewitness account of the impact of the Chiefs on Queen Victoria see V. Mallet (Ed.), Life with Queen Victoria (1968), pp. 69-70

3 For a short but interesting account of the current view of the Chiefs' earlier mode of rule see "Traditional Society had a Machinery of Consultation," Botswana Weekly News, 14 JUN 72.

4 See P. G. L. Wass "Community Development in Botswana" (1972), pp. 24-25. A dissenting voice is L. Marquard, "The Problem of Government" in J. M. Davis (Ed.) Modern Industry and the African (1933) p. 252.

banishment of Tshekedi Khama (temporarily as it turned out).¹ This bizarre episode had a kind of sequel in the exile of Seretse Khama and his removal from the position of Chief-designate fifteen years later.²

A recurrent theme in this study is the interaction between the traditional leaders of the Batswana and the new institutions³ of Local Government which aimed at "modernising and democratising" the clan system.⁴ Accordingly the legislation concerning the one must inevitably be considered along with that affecting the other.

The Local Government System⁵

The legal framework of local government arose from the report of the Local Government Committee (established in 1963) to the Legislative Council⁶ in 1964. It was axiomatic to the then colonial Government that an elected system of Local Government be established before Independence; since that day was by then uncomfortably close, it was necessary to proceed with some haste to set up the new system. One consequence was the important decision to recognise the existing clan system by basing the units of rural local government on the clan territories and by converting the clan administrations⁷ into the nucleus

1 See Halpern, op. cit., pp. 268-270

2 See above, p. 21

3 See D. Fig, "The Rise and Demise of a Traditional Élite: a political history of the role and impact of the Botswana Chiefs." (1972)

4 See Chapter 10 below for a fuller discussion of the rationale behind this.

5 For useful accounts see J. E. S. Griffiths, "A Note on Local Government," BN&R, II (1970); and W. Tordoff, "Local Administration in Botswana," (Parts I and II), Journal of Administration Overseas XII, 4 (1973) and XIII, 1 (1974).

6 See Chapter 10, especially pp. 394-395.

7 The pre-1966 clan administrations were very small. See A. J. Beeby et al. Report on the Structure and Conditions of Service of Tribal Administrations in the Bechuanaland Protectorate [1963].

of the new District Council staff. Administrative convenience was however only part of the reason for this decision: the other was more directly political. It was deemed politic to disturb the Chiefs as little as possible and to persuade people that the new system represented a development of the old system rather than its abolition.¹ Only where clans appeared too small to be viable were they amalgamated for Local Government purposes (this happened to the Balete, Barolong² and Batlokwa, who were originally scheduled to form the South East District); the non-Tswana groups were dealt with on an ad hoc basis since they had never enjoyed the same recognition as the eight Tswana clans ("Principal Tribes").

The time factor also meant that the models for legislation were imported (from Malaŵi) and adopted with little discussion of alternatives. The basic statutes were the loi-cadre itself, the Local Government (District Councils) Law of 1965, the Local Government Tax Law of 1965, the Chieftainship Law of 1965 and the Townships Proclamation. The details of the composition of each Council were established by Statutory Instrument.³

The basic functions of the District Councils are: primary education, the most important, mandatory function;⁴ water; minor roads; and public health. In addition, Councils are required to collect local

1 As Heeger, *inter alia*, points out, a common effect of colonial independence was the institutionalisation of certain particular identities; this is a case in point. G. A. Heeger, The Politics of Underdevelopment (1974), pp. 75-94.

2 The Barolong were subsequently placed in the Ngwaketse District, which became the Southern District. (See Chapter 3.)

3 Laws 35, 20 and 29 of 1965; Cap. 120; Legal Notices 43-50 of 1966, amended by Nos. 104-111 of 1969.

4 Education Law No. 40 of 1966

government tax - a graduated personal tax with a floor¹ of R3 and a ceiling of R48 - operate trade licensing and control the making and selling of traditional beer (bojalwa jwa Setswana).

The powers retained by the Chieftainship comprise basically the exercise of judicial functions and, with the assistance of the Local Police, a general requirement to maintain order. The traditional right to summon the people to the kgotla remains unaffected. Other important functions have however been removed from the Chiefs. Of these, the collection and disposal of stray livestock (matimela) has been transferred to District Councils,² thereby taking away a useful source of income and patronage from the Chiefs. Even more importantly, the control of land allocation has been transferred to to a troika Land Board, consisting of representatives of the traditional administration, the Council and the Government.³

The Government's powers over the traditional administration now extend not only to recognition but appointment, suspension and removal. The power has been seen in the resignation under pressure of Chief Neale Sechele of the Bakwena, the one-year suspension of Chief Seepapitso IV of the Bangwaketse (son of Chief Bathoen, who resigned in 1969), and the recent removal of Chief Basele II of the Barolong.⁴

Not unnaturally, the Chiefs in general have not been very happy with the trend of events. A member of the District Administration

1 Exemption is granted to those deemed to be destitutes, by Council committee.

2 The Matimela Act No. 25 1968, The Matimela Regulation of 1969 and earlier Matimela model bye-laws.

3 The Tribal Land Act No. 54 of 1968 and the Tribal Land (Amendment) Act No. 48 of 1969.

4 See BDN, 8 SEP 70; and Speed & Stevens, op. cit., pp. 383-384

summed up the relationship between District Council and Tribal Administration by saying that

both institutions existed for the benefit of each other and that they were serving one community. He went on to say that Tribal Administration was obsessed by the idea that everything had been snatched away from them. The Council was also suffering from inferiority complex in that they wanted to take everything from Tribal Administration in spite of the reciprocal nature of their existence.¹

The Chiefs' early misgivings about the new Local Government system were mollified by their appointment, in appropriate Councils, as Chairmen until this was altered to mere ex officio membership in 1969.² It is clear that few Chiefs were willing tamely to endorse the opinion of the late Tshekedi Khama that

Tribalism will die in the natural political growth of Africa and with it chieftainships as they have died elsewhere. It seems unnecessary . . . to attempt to perpetuate this institution where it has ceased to be respected.³

Some time previously the Chiefs had had to accept the end of the old regimental labour system, whereby an age-set would be ordered to undertake any task, including public works, collection of matimela and performing services for the Chiefs. In a sense this last function was inherited, after a gap, by Ipelegeng or Self-help, institutionalised in Village Development Committees.

It is worth expatiating briefly on this subject,⁴ since the Self-help principle is the front line of the Government's attempt to effect improvements at the grassroots; until the windfall of the mineral reserves it virtually constituted the whole of the rural

1 Central District Council Minutes, 20-21 MAR 73 (emphasis added).

2 See Appendix A

3 Cited in S. M. Gabatshwane, Tshekedi Khama of Bechuanaland (1961), p. 67.

4 Discussed at some length in Chapter 6

development policy. The abolition of "regimental" labour was well understood. The attempt to make Self-help into its voluntary successor were bedevilled however by the Food-for-Work scheme, brought about by drought/famine and the conditions on which aid was given. A key source of confusion was the use of "self-help" terminology in the Food-for-Work scheme, especially the word "Ipelegeng",¹ as this quotation from a Government press statement in 1966 unequivocally shows:

IPELEGENG PROGRAMME COMES INTO OPERATION TOMORROW

Today . . . the Bechuanaland Emergency Food Programme for famine relief comes to an end: and as from tomorrow, July 1, the Community Development Ipelegeng ("Food For Work") programme comes into operation.

This means that instead of receiving free, unconditional issues of rations, the able-bodied will be expected to work for the rations for themselves and their families.²

A critique of the related semantic problems was given, appropriately, by J. S. Matšheng, a later Director of Community Development. He wrote

In seTswana, Community Development is 'boipelego'. It was unfortunate that those who were responsible for Famine Relief chose to call it 'ipelegeng' instead of 'mophako'. Many people tend to confuse proper Community Development and Famine Relief because of the seTswana translations of the two expressions. The combination of the two programmes was not in the interest of Community Development.³

Thus the new system failed to replace exactly the former system of clan regimental labour directed by the Chief.⁴

1 The origins of this term are documented in P. G. L. Wass, "Community Development in Botswana with Special Reference to the Evolution of Policy and Organisation 1947-1970," (1972) pp. 210-216.

2 Bechuanaland Daily News, 30 JUN 66

3 J. S. Matšheng, "The Community Approach to Rural Development," BN&R, III (1971), p. 197

4 See N. Mitchison, "African Lesson in Local Initiative," The Scotsman, 16 DEC 76

As the powers of the Chiefs were reduced, the position of the District Commissioners was enhanced. In 1970 they not only became ex officio members of District Councils but were given powers of supervision.¹ The culmination came with a Presidential Circular late in 1970 which set up the District Development Committees, chaired in each district by the District Commissioner and clerked by one of his subordinates, the District Officer (Development). The DDCs were entrusted with the job of co-ordination at district level and with planning in conjunction with the District Councils.²

Finance

The resources available to Councils were limited. After exhausting the funds they inherited from the Tribal Treasuries, they have become heavily dependent on central Government grants to supplement the Local Government Tax revenues, and are obliged to spend 80% or more of their income on primary education. Tables 1.16 and 1.17 give examples³ of the sums available together with a breakdown of expenditure; the years chosen are one from each of the two Sessions, i.e. before and after the leap in central Government revenues.⁴

In the light of the growing dependence of the Councils on the central Government for their income, it is worth asking whether greater efforts could not have been made by Councils to increase their own revenues, since - unlike the traditional administration, whose previous sources of income have been transferred to the Government and the Councils - Local Authorities do possess this measure of

1 Local Government (District Councils)(Amendment) Act No 14 of 1970

2 See Chapter 8 below, and Tordoff, op. cit. (Part II)

3 See also Appendix L

4 See pp. 15-16 above

financial independence, in principle at least. One answer is that the collection of tax has posed problems for the administration as far back as records go.¹ Moreover as it was politically unpopular, entailing as it did assessments of livestock holdings, few Councillors took an active interest in revenue collection, despite regular exhortations by Government spokesmen.

TABLE 1.16

INCOME OF THREE SELECTED DISTRICT COUNCILS
In two sample years (thousand Rands)

		LG Tax	School Fees	Other Internal	Total Internal	Govt Grant	TOTAL INCOME	Govt Grant as % of total
<u>CDC</u>	<u>1968</u>	280	174	87	541	115	656	17.5%
	<u>1973</u>	400	222	185	807	234	1,040	22.5%
<u>SDC</u>	<u>1968</u>	72	45	18	135	44	180	24.4%
	<u>1973</u>	125	49	39	213	74	287	25.8%
<u>NEDC</u>	<u>1968</u>	23	32	7	62	28	90	31.1%
	<u>1973</u>	32	36	11	79	72	151	47.7%

TABLE 1.17

EXPENDITURE OF THREE SELECTED DISTRICT COUNCILS
In two sample years (thousand Rands)

		General Admin.	Education	Other	TOTAL	Surplus	Educ. as % of total
<u>CDC</u>	<u>1968</u>	95	444	54	593	63	74.9%
	<u>1973</u>	120	738	182	1,040	--	71.0%
<u>SDC</u>	<u>1968</u>	25	131	11	166	14	78.9%
	<u>1973</u>	54	188	44	287	--	65.2%
<u>NEDC</u>	<u>1968</u>	9	71	7	87	3	81.6%
	<u>1973</u>	26	120	5	151	-	79.5%

Note: Figures are rounded in both the above tables.

Sources: Estimates of Expenditure and Income, 3 Town Councils 1968/69 and 9 District Councils 1968; Town and District Councils Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure: recurrent budget 1973

¹ For a graphic account of the difficulties encountered around the turn of the Century see A. W. Hodson, Trekking the Great Thirst (2nd Edition, 3rd Impression, 1914), Ch. III and passim

Composition and Procedure

The bulk of Council membership was composed of elected members, with a minority of Government nominees. The latter comprised two categories: the ex officio members (Chief or Chiefs as appropriate, and after 1970 the District Commissioner) and the political appointees, the number of which was increased in 1969. The latter category in practice often included members of the traditional administration. Table 1.18 summarises the composition of the three Councils¹ selected for study, while Table 1.19 indicates the number of people involved in each district.

TABLE 1.18

MEMBERSHIP OF THE THREE SELECTED DISTRICT COUNCILS

		Elected	Ex Officio	Nominated	TOTAL	Chairman
<u>CDC</u>	<u>Session I</u>	32	1 ^a	5	38	Ag. Chief ^a
	<u>Session II</u>	32	2 ^b	5	39	Elected
<u>SDC</u>	<u>Session I</u>	24	1 ^c	4	29	Chief ^c
	<u>Session II</u>	24	3 ^d	6	33	Elected
<u>NEDC</u>	<u>Session I</u>	7	-	3	10	Elected
	<u>Session II</u>	7	1 ^e	5	13	Elected

- Notes: a Acting Chief of Bangwato
 b Acting Chief + District Commissioner
 c Chief of Bangwaketse
 d Chiefs of Bangwaketse and Barolong, + District Commissioner
 e District Commissioner

1 Appendix L gives a bird's eye view of all twelve Councils at their inception.

TABLE 1.19

POPULATION AND AREA OF THE THREE SELECTED DISTRICTS

		<u>Population</u> (thousands)	<u>Electorate</u> (thousands)	<u>Area</u>	<u>Voters per</u> <u>(elected) Cllr.</u>
<u>CDC</u>	<u>Session I</u>	208	80	56,070 sq ml	2,509
	<u>Session II</u>	229	99	(145,221 sq km)	3,102
<u>SDC</u>	<u>Session I</u>	82	27	10,518 sq ml	1,130
	<u>Session II</u>	91	31	(27,242 sq km)	1,310
<u>NEDC</u>	<u>Session I</u>	25	8	2,056 sq ml	1,125
	<u>Session II</u>	29	9	(5,325 sq km)	1,285

Notes: Population: figures from Censuses of 1964 and 1971

Electorate: figures of registered voters for 1966 and 1974 Local Government elections

Area: Botswana has officially adopted the metric system (SI units) in full

The first Local Government elections were held on 13 June 1966. Council elections, originally scheduled to be held every three years, were changed before the Local Government elections due in June 1969 so that they would be thenceforth synchronised with Parliamentary General Elections. Thus the second and third Council elections took place in October 1969 and October 1974. By-elections were held on instructions from the Ministry of Local Government & Lands, usually three months after the vacancy had occurred.

The Ministry also issued a set of model Standing Orders¹ which were adopted by most Councils without alteration. They reflect in general the English model² from which they were derived and thus include provision for a fair degree of formality in procedure (including restrictions on the number and length of speeches,

1 MLG&L, District Councillors handbook (1966) Part II; and idem, A Handbook for Chairmen, Secretaries and Members of District (and Town) Councils (1968), Part II

2 A number of advisers from English and Welsh local authorities were engaged to assist in establishing the system.

and requirements of prior notice of questions and motions) and structurally, the importance of committees (exercising, in accordance with stated terms of reference, delegated and advisory functions). It is stipulated that the official language of minutes is English, of debates English and Setswana. The quorum was set at over half the membership, while the chairman has an original and a casting vote. Meetings were to be held at least quarterly. Councils had the power to amend their own Standing Orders, More is said about procedure in the next four chapters.

P A R T I

THE DISTRICT COUNCILS

CHAPTER 2

THREE DISTRICT COUNCILS

The significance of Councils as political institutions lies in their expressions of opinion, the issues that Councillors raise and the patterns of co-operation or conflict among them which are manifested in what appeared a new and somewhat strange and artificial arena. So, even if Councils' powers to take final decisions, e.g. over the allocation of resources, are limited, their use by Councillors as a forum in which to articulate demands, to express grievances or propose policy changes is of definite significance for studying the inputs to the political system of the District and thus the country as a whole. The aim therefore is to produce as accurate and authentic a picture as possible of the politics of the District Councils being studied; in particular it is hoped that the analysis will isolate factors which might shed light on the process of allocation of resources within the Council's gift, and of determining the priorities for and method of presentation of plans and requests to the central government. To do this, data will be examined on an aggregate and comparative basis for all three Councils over the eight-year period, covering two sessions, under examination. The flavour of politics in, and the particular concerns of each Council are then examined in turn in the following chapters.

The Parties

The most interesting facet to be explored, and the variable which led to the selection of the particular group of Councils, is the political

parties. With certain minor exceptions¹ all the Councillors in these Councils were readily identifiable as belonging to one of three parties (out of the four in existence in Botswana),² although all four parties did contest seats in these districts. The provision made by law for the use of party (as well as individual) symbols and colours for the guidance of an only partly literate electorate was in fact used by the vast majority of candidates in the 1966 and 1969 local government elections.³ Indeed the assumption underlying both the Constitution of the Republic and the Electoral Act is that voting will be predominantly by party. An indication of the importance attached to the party label is provided moreover by the prominence given by the media to carpet-crossing⁴ by Councillors (a practice which occurred only twice officially in the three District Councils studied but happened in several other Councils in 1970). Indeed the very act of changing party and announcing it publicly indicates the importance attached to the party label by the Councillors concerned.⁵ It is also worthy of note that in the two politically divided Councils the arrangement of seating tended to bear a clear relationship with party, particularly in the early meetings after an election.⁶

1 One Independent in Session I, North East District Council, and Chief Seepapitso IV in Session II of the Southern District Council.

2 The exception is the BIP, which is represented only in the North West District Council.

3 In 1969 and thereafter, but not 1966, they coincided with a (Parliamentary and Presidential) General Election.

4 Invariably, as far as Councillors were concerned, to the ruling BDP.

5 Some candidates, including one Councillor and one ex-Councillor, changed their ticket at an election.

6 For connoisseurs of parliamentary seating arrangements, the BNF in the Southern District Council sit on the chairman's right; the BPP in the North East District Council on the opposite side from the BDP.

Geographical Factors

Seating patterns also reflect another factor which turned out to be of significance, namely the geographical distribution of Polling Districts. Thus the tendency is for minutes to list Councillors not alphabetically but by constituencies and polling districts - a practice which reflects the way people tend to think in geographical terms.¹ The particular relationship in terms of influence of the district capital vis-à-vis the outlying areas is analysed to see if the occasional allegations of domination by Councillors from the district headquarters are borne out by the behaviour of Councillors.

This point relates further to the question of their role as local representatives and spokesmen, and whether the initiatives taken by Councillors are in fact biased towards articulating the demands of their constituents.

BEHAVIOUR OF COUNCILLORS

Councillors as Ward Representatives

There is little dispute about Councillors' roles as representatives of the Polling District for which they were elected. This is borne out consistently in interviews, seminars and training sessions for Councillors. It is not worth going into the refinements of the old "delegate versus representative" question, since the distinction is none too clear to District Councillors, nor is there any kind of machinery in practice for the enforcement of the views of any group at the ward (i.e. Polling District) level: reëlection is the only opportunity to assert popular control and that works generally as much as on a party basis in Botswana as in the English model on which the system was based.

¹ This is derived from the official listing of Wards and Constituencies on a geographical basis.

What can be tested is the extent to which Councillors raise local ward matters, i.e. those concerning a particular village or area within the District, at Council meetings. All motions tabled¹ and questions asked in the three Districts during the first two sessions of their existence have been analysed to determine the proportion of "initiatives" (i.e. motions and questions) which exhibited "ward representative" characteristics. These initiatives total 1264,² a little over half being motions (683) and under half (578) questions. This number is therefore sufficiently large to justify certain conclusions. A caveat must be entered in parenthesis, to the effect that the classification of some questions and motions was inevitably arbitrary. By "motions" is meant substantive, "private Members' motions,"³ formally tabled (or accepted as urgent motions by the meeting and/or Chairman and appearing either as additional motions or under "Any Other Business"). Procedural motions are not included nor the informal motions arising in the course of debate on, for example, committee reports. Only on rare occasions did such motions raise interesting points, e.g. of party combination.

Table 2.1 sets out the data for all elected councillors in the three Districts for the two sessions 1966/74.

1 "Tabled" in the British rather than the American sense of the term.

2 One or two sets of minutes are missing, which would mean an estimated grand total of perhaps 1300.

3 Most Councillors are under the impression, from reading the Councillor's Handbook, that these are the only kinds of "motions".

TABLE 2.1

PROPORTION OF INITIATIVES CONCERNED WITH WARD MATTERS (in Percentages)¹

		<u>Questions</u>	<u>Motions</u>	<u>Combined</u>
Central	Session I	55	46	51
District Council	Session II	54	46	49
	Total	55	46	51
North East	Session I	31	50	54
District Council	Session II	33	54	46
	Total	33	53	45
Southern	Session I	58	55	56
District Council	Session II	41	54	49
	Total	48	55	52

From Table 2.1 it can be seen that approximately half of the initiatives taken by Councillors concerned ward questions. The only striking variant is the questions asked by (elected) Councillors in the North East. Leaving aside for the moment the question of party (a majority of elected Councillors belong to the Opposition BPP), one possible explanation derives from the small size of the District: information about particular villages etc. was perhaps less required than in the sizeable Southern District or the vast Central District. This explanation is however pure conjecture and must take second place to a party-oriented explanation, to be covered later. In any case it is noticeable that motions in the North East are closer to the average; this leads to a possible interpretation along the lines that questions in the District Councils are much more genuinely "requests for information" than the typical Parliamentary question in the National Assembly, the function of which is more obviously political, whether constituency or

¹ The figures refer to elected councillors only. Only in the case of the North East District Council does the impact of nominated Councillors make a noticeable difference, reducing the percentage of motions concerned with local matters by 3% and increasing the figure for questions by 2%; the overall impact is a reduction of 1% in initiatives concerned with local ("ward") matters.

general in content. The opposite case could, unfortunately for those seeking definitive answers, equally well be argued, viz. that constituency or ward questions are politically "safer" or more neutral, and thus likely to be more favoured by the ruling party. Evidence for this has been found in another context.¹ This line of interpretation would accord to the BPP Councillors in the North East a sophisticated political objective: asking general questions, including matters of principle, but when it came to motions concentrating far more on attempting to deliver the goods in terms meaningful to their constituents. The resolution of this controversy will be left to a later stage when the question of party behaviour is analysed in all three Councils; and may indeed be explicable in terms also of the nature of each of the three parties represented: BNF and BPP need not share any characteristic other than of being parties (or even groups of Councillors) in Opposition.

For a general assessment of the role of Councillors as "representatives", the following quotation is valuable. It comes from an unpublished report written by two Peace Corps members, C. Bauer and J. Licke, seconded to two District Councils (Kgatleng and Kweneng Districts) as Council Advisers for two years.

Councillors as Representatives

What is meant by "representative"? Is it one who decides as best he can what is needed, is it one who speaks as an individual who is representative of a group, or is it one who canvasses the opinion of the people in his area and brings their consensus to the attention of the council? If, as is suspected, it is intended to be the latter the conclusion must be that not all councillors understand the concept. This is not surprising. The idea of an "elected Representative" in the context of the council system is not universal. Nor, prior to 1961, was this concept in use in Botswana.

1 W. J. A. Macartney, "African Westminster? The Parliament of Lesotho," Parliamentary Affairs, XXIII, 2 (Spring 1970)



a. A few councillors have clashed with CDAs [Community Development Assistants] over the leadership of Ipelegeng [self-help] groups. Sometimes a councillor will order the people to do something because he is the "representative".

b. Councillors occasionally demand special treatment because of the position of "representative".

c. Unfortunately many councillors seldom consult the people before council meetings and equally seldom hold meetings with the public after council meetings to describe council activities. They apparently feel they are representative of their constituency.¹

Some of Bauer and Licke's points reappear in Chapter 6, as do some of the findings of the survey by Dr. John Holm of Cleveland State University.² Suffice it to say that both reports cast considerable doubt on the degree of consultation which goes on between the Councillor and the people who elect him. This said, there is an apparent conflict with the findings of surveys carried out by interview and questionnaire at conferences and training sessions for Councillors. The universally stated position of Councillors was that they ought to/usually did consult people before a Council meeting and informed them after each meeting concerning Council decisions. When more precision was sought, most questionnaires produced an average interval between kgotla (public) meetings of 2-3 months.³ A survey of Village Development Committees⁴ showed 40% of VDCs as not having seen their Councillor at any of the previous five meetings, and only 5% had "perfect attendance".

1 C. Bauer & J. Licke, Local Government in Kgatleng and Kweneng District Councils (August 1968-November 1970), (1971), p. 11.

2 J. D. Holm, survey, AUG-SEP 1970 (Unpublished preliminary report).

3 UBLS, Division of Extra Mural Services, Report of the Town and District Councillors Seminar held on Sunday 8th April 1973 at the Francistown Teacher Training College, UBLS/DEMS Northern Office Francistown, 13 DEC 73

4 A. Etherington, Villagers as Developers, I (1974)

Personal observation leads to the conclusion that, because Councillors are public figures and identified as such by the public in a vague general way, and because they consequently spend quite a bit of time talking to people about local affairs, the Councillors probably feel genuinely that they do consult their constituents; the snag is that the consultation is, with the exception of the occasional kgotla meeting, unpublicised and unsystematic. The close proximity of the average Councillor to his constituents is ascertainable from the small size of Polling District (i.e. local government constituency, sometimes referred to as a ward),¹ which make it possible for a Councillor in the Southern District to be elected with as few as 119 votes; in the North East the equivalent is 256 and for the larger Central District 356. The highest number of votes cast for a candidate in these three Councils was 1446 in Central District. On the other hand low population density in some Polling Districts makes it extremely difficult for Councillors to make either frequent or regular contact with many of their constituents.

Concerns

There are thus limits to the extent to which the role of the individual Councillor as representative (in whatever sense of the word) of his/her ward can be ascertained. The collective view held by Councillors can however shed useful light, and in particular indicate which matters concern Councillors most. Accordingly all motions and questions (i.e. not just "ward" matters) were analysed in terms of content, to determine the frequency with which various issues were raised by the Councillors in each Council. A list of 26 topics was used for analysis. The top five topics are listed in Table 2.2 for each Council.

1 The use of the word "ward" can however lead to confusion with the traditional ward, used in the Tribal Administration, and discussed extensively by Schapera.

TABLE 2.2

COUNCILLORS' MAIN CONCERNS

	<u>Questions</u>		<u>Motions</u>		<u>Combined</u>
<u>Central</u>	1 Education	1	Education	1	Education
<u>District</u>	2 Water	2	Water	2	Water
<u>Council</u>	3 <u>Ipelegeng</u> *	3	Health	3	Health
	4 Health		{Cattle	4	Traditional
	5 Traditional	4	{Communications	5	<u>Ipelegeng</u>
			{Traditional		
<u>North East</u>	1 Education	1	Education	1	Education
<u>District</u>	2 Water		{Communications	2	Communications
<u>Council</u>	3 Communications	2	{ <u>Matimela</u> **	3	Water
	4 <u>Matimela</u>	4	Water	4	<u>Matimela</u>
	5 {Commerce	5	Revenue	5	Revenue
	{Central Gov't				
<u>Southern</u>	1 Water	1	Water	1	Water
<u>District</u>	2 Education	2	Education	2	Education
<u>Council</u>	3 Ethnic		{Traditional	3	Traditional
	4 Traditional	3	{Health	4	Ethnic
	5 Revenue		{Communications	5	Communications

* Ipelegeng here means Self-help, Food-for-Work, Famine Relief, and also references to Village Development Committees and Parent/Teacher Associations: the whole range of village-level development activity.

** Matimela are stray cattle, the disposal of which was governed by tradition and the Chief, but became a Council responsibility.

Note: "Traditional" refers to the traditional system (alias Tribal Administration) - Chiefs, Headmen etc., but not including Matimela. "Ethnic" refers to matters pertaining to specific groups in the population of the district, including racial questions but also (and principally, in the case of the Southern District) clan or tribal groups, in particular the Barolong.

Several points stand out clearly from Table 2.2. The first is that all three Councils included education and water amongst their main concerns. Both these items are among the four basic services for which District Councils are responsible: education is by far the biggest item in the budget of all District Councils¹ - hence the remark "Councils are really education authorities"² - while water is the most acute problem

1 See p. 41 above

2 See the Tordoff Report (1970), p. 23; and p. 224 below.

the Batswana nation.¹ Of the other two main District Council responsibilities, health and roads, the latter appears (as "communications") on the priority list of two Councils, while the former appears on only one. The Chieftainship (or traditional system) appears in the two Councils where the institution of paramount chief exists - the North East has a more devolved system, somewhat reminiscent of that of the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria - and reflects Councillors' preoccupation, especially strong during the First Session, with the handover and demarcation of the powers formerly exercised by the Chief, and the relationship which was to exist at local level with the unreformed Headman (kgosana) system. The question of matimela is another aspect of the traditional system, since the Matimela Act conferred on District Councils powers over stray cattle previously exercised by the traditional authorities. It is perhaps worth noting in passing at this stage that other aspects of the reform of district institutions, specifically land allocation and planning, did appear as significant items in the Second Session although not meriting a place in the overall table.

One or two items appear somewhat puzzling at first sight. Why is it, for instance, that the vast Central District is not as concerned with communications as the small North East or relatively compact Southern District? The answer need not rely wholly on a subjective interpretation: there are in the North East in particular long-standing grievances about the roads. The concern with revenue raising voiced only by the same Council, on the other hand, can easily be explained by reference to the extremely limited financial resources possessed by this district.

1 Councillors at one training conference were asked to list various topics in terms of priority and placed water unhesitatingly at the top of the list.

Similarly the concern with "ethnic" (or communal)¹ questions in the Southern (formerly Ngwaketse) District, reflects the particular grievances felt by the Barolong community. A last unsolved question is the concern of the Central District with self-help. Was it indeed because of the District's "model"² behaviour? These questions are examined later in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

The proposition has been advanced³ that most of the politicians holding office at national or district level can be classified as "new men" - new in the sense of being of non-aristocratic background - whose income typically comes not only from cattle but also from commerce, particularly small shops in rural areas. Unfortunately it is not easy to produce evidence that is at all conclusive from the minutes of Council meetings to test this hypothesis: the concerns of Councillors are not clearly related to their personal economic interests. The question of cattle and other livestock, for instance, concerns very many people and it is only occasionally possible - e.g. in specific questions concerning cattle in the Barolong area of Southern District - to trace a direct connexion.

Councillors do however have one interest in common: that of securing increases in their remuneration (allowances of various kinds) and facilities. And, while the number of motions tabled (and questions asked) on this issue was not large enough to appear in Table 2.2, it is clear that the question had a degree of priority for Councillors. Details will be given in the chapters on individual Councils but in general

1 The problem with using the word "communal" in the context of Botswana is its association with the land tenure system covered by the Tribal Land Act.

2 A description used to the writer by a civil servant while trying to persuade him to do research in the Central District.

3 Notably by Adam Kuper in his Kalahari Village Politics (1970), Chapter 3.

terms two points are worthy of note. One is that Councillors have frequently used for comparison the allowances available for travel and subsistence to civil servants and MPs, and the facilities available to members of the traditional administration - and have been more than somewhat annoyed¹ to be told that they cannot use telephones in the tribal administration sub-offices, nor claim for phone calls made in the course of their ward duties. The same applies to postage. The official line seems to be that only the facilities available in the District Council headquarters are "official", despite the disadvantage this doctrine implies for the (bulk of the) councillors who represent remote polling districts; in the North East indeed, all councillors are in this position. The second point to be made here is that motions to increase allowances are usually a bid for more financial resources to be transferred from the centre: i.e. the Council engaging in pressure group politics. Only one occasion has come to light where Councillors actually sat down and pruned estimates from other heads in order to increase their own remuneration.²

Levels of Activity

Cynicism about Councillors' levels of activity and awareness is rife among the informed or partly-informed public, or rather observers - and matched only by the ignorance and apathy amongst the electorate at large. The cynical view would be that Councillors do not do very much, by way of either initiating moves or informing themselves so as to be able to take meaningful decisions; and furthermore that Councils are dominated by certain leading lights, nominated notables or members of the aristocracy (accustomed to playing a leading role in kgotla debates), whose

1 See below, pp. 157-158

2 See below, p. 219

advice is generally followed by the typical passive Councillor. Such a view is extremely difficult to verify or refute with certainty¹ and in reality reveals more of the model in the mind of the critic than about the facts of the situation. The question of activity and leadership will be examined in relation to two variables - party and constituency - and becomes meaningful only in relation to other variables and to the peculiar features of each Council. In particular the position of the non-elected Councillors will be analysed. One or two generalisations may however be permitted and a hypothesis put forward. The first generalisation is that Councils have gone through at least two phases - the early phase, marked by a fair degree of activity, in which Councillors made their mark on behalf of their wards, and tried to have the role and position of this new institution of District Council defined; and a later phase of growing complacency, modified to some extent by the widening of the area of Councils' concern through the district planning procedures introduced along with the District Development Committees. The second generalisation, which is derived from the contrasting experience of the Central and Southern District Councils, is that party competition keeps up and in fact increases the level of activity, among members of the ruling party as well as the Opposition party in question. The hypothesis is that "leading lights", if they exist, will be found to dominate committee membership and especially chairmanships; and that such members are less likely (because they have less need) to take initiatives "on the floor of the house," i.e. in full Council meetings. What is being postulated, then, is a distinction between "government" and "backbenchers."

1 Especially since the position of the "natural leaders" changed over the eight years studied. The difficulty arises in extrapolating the trend as much as from examining the early, "settling down" period.

Without testing the hypothesis,¹ it can be argued that it ought to obtain for one good reason, viz. the importance attached to election to committees and indeed the Chairmanship and Vice-chairmanship. Elections are the only issue about which caucus meetings are normally, indeed virtually universally, called.²

Voting

Few matters are ever formally voted upon in full Council (votes in committees are almost unheard of), and, as will be seen from Table 2.3, a vote is usually a sign that a motion is about to fail.

TABLE 2.3

MOTIONS VOTED UPON

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Passed</u>	<u>Rejected</u>	<u>Amended/ Passed</u>	<u>Amended/ Shelved</u>	<u>Passed/ Ruled out</u>	<u>Ward Matters? Yes / No</u>	
<u>All Motions</u>	60	12	42	4	1	1	15	45
<u>One-Party Situation</u>	38	6	26	4	1	1	11	27
<u>Two-Party Situation</u>	22	6	16	-	-	-	4	18

From this two conclusions flow: first, that any analysis of voting is generally a waste of time, and secondly that the ideology of consensualism often posited as a universal feature of decision-making in Africa is indeed a powerful influence, whether Councils are divided into parties or not. In passing it may be remarked that "moving the direct negative" is uncommon as an explicit device but can be taken to exist implicitly, or alternatively that Chairmen call for a vote if there is obvious

¹ Which is further examined later in this chapter.

² The evidence, from interviews, on this is overwhelming; caucussing on other matters is the subject of conflicting testimony.

deadlock in discussion, or an irreconcilable faction opposed to a motion. In sum, the occasions when motions fail, or are voted upon (whether they pass or not), are the exception. Most motions are passed without a vote or sometimes referred straight to committees without a vote. There is here a conflict with Standing Orders which provide that matters falling within the remit of a particular committee should be referred to that committee first and automatically. This rule was however more honoured in the breach than the observance, and in practice the Chairman decides whether to apply the Standing Orders; or to allow debate, sometimes followed by a remission to the committee. One sees here a conflict between the (traditional) desire to allow a member to have his say, and the rule book. A compromise solution is thus often adopted.

Another reason why so few motions are opposed is that some resolutions, usually involving extra expenditure, are passed and "referred to Government" - i.e. these are matters where the District Council is either asking for money (or other resources) from the government to enable it to do something within its powers, or alternatively where the Council is making representations on behalf of the district on matters which are strictly speaking ultra vires. Others are referred to the District Administration (the District Commissioner), or the Chief or (latterly) the Land Board.¹ As can be seen from Table 2.4 below, overall almost 11% of motions are thus passed on to outside bodies. The term "outside" includes the Chief and Land Board even if they are formally represented on/responsible to the District Council respectively, and emphasizes the de facto autonomy, non-integration or at least non-subordination of the traditional system and land allocation. Overlapping membership is not a guarantee of anything other than extra allowances, and work, for the persons involved.

1 In the Southern District, either the Ngwaketse or the Rolong Land Board.

TABLE 2.4PROPORTION OF MOTIONS REFERRED TO OUTSIDE BODIES (percentages)

	<u>Central</u>	<u>Government District Admin.</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Trad. Authority</u>	<u>Land Boards</u>	<u>Total</u>
CDC	5	4	9	1	-	10
NEDC	11	3	14	-	-	14
SDC	4	0.5	5	2	2	9
OVERALL	5	2	7	2	1	11

From Table 2.4 two points in particular deserve mention. One is the greater dependence on the Government felt by the impoverished North East District Council compared with the others; the other is the greater importance attached by the Southern District Council to the Chief than to the District Commissioner, reflecting the poor relationship between the first Chairman of the Council, the powerful Chief Bathoefi II, and the District Commissioner.

In more general terms it must be said too that the table understates the role of Councils as pressure groups, or channels for the articulation of requests from rural Botswana, in that all Council minutes go automatically to the Ministry of Local Government and Lands, while other resolutions may be reflected at a later date in Council estimates. Again no account is taken at this stage of the newly-established planning machinery involving District Development Committees. The 7% of motions thus passed and referred to the government for action are these specifically identified as such by the Chairman or Secretary and minuted accordingly: obviously the influence of these two office-holders is an important influence.

Councillors as managers

Quite apart from their formal activities at meetings of the full Council and its committees, Councillors may play a role through direct contact with the Council staff - what the latter usually describe as "interfering with the administration." The evidence on this aspect of Councillors' activities is inconclusive. The writer found few examples of such intervention by ordinary Councillors, although Chairmen were much more frequently involved in discussion, occasionally to the extent of earning a reprimand from the Council for their actions.¹ The general picture which emerged from extensive interviews of Council staff and others however revealed very little of what could be described as informal attempts to influence decisions taken administratively. Most personal visits to the Council offices were to seek information rather than exert pressure, although obviously checking on the progress of a project is a form of pressure. This conclusion, however, for the three Councils selected, is somewhat at variance with the picture of the Kweneng² and Kgatleng Districts painted by Bauer and Licke.³ The two ex-Council Advisers state: "A few councillors interfere with council staff - ordering them about and undertaking reprimands."⁴ This would indicate a greater degree of interference by Councillors in the Kgatleng and Kweneng Districts than in the three Councils selected for this study.

1 E.g. in the Central District on the question of representation on the Selebi-Phikwe licensing body: CDC Minutes, 27-28 SEP 72. A rare example of "ministerial responsibility" was the resignation of the Education Committee Chairman of Ghanzi District Council following poor results in the district's schools, a matter which was also raised in Parliament, BDN, 28 FEB 75.

2 Vengroff's references to "influence" do not mention this kind of activity.

3 Op. cit.

4 Ibid., p.6

PARTY AS A VARIABLE

A major consideration in selecting the three District Councils chosen was to examine the behaviour and test the impact of different parties. All three Councils have, by government policy, a BDP majority. In the Central District Council the Democratic Party won all but one seat¹ in both elections. The North East District electorate by contrast returned People's Party majorities in both elections, but with nominated BDP Councillors making Domkrag rule possible. The Southern (formerly Ngwaketse) District was solidly BDP in 1966 but in 1969 divided almost fifty:fifty, the Democratic Party having a bare majority of elected seats in an election in which the National Front failed to contest all seats. Consideration will now be given to the question of party behaviour in the three Councils, with a view to seeing whether there are significant differences between the three parties, or between BDP Councillors and Opposition Councillors, and, if differences emerge, in what way and to what degree.

Ward Representatives

Table 2.5 summarises the analysis of initiatives taken by Councillors.

TABLE 2.5

PERCENTAGE OF INITIATIVES CONCERNED WITH WARD QUESTIONS

	<u>Questions</u>	<u>Motions</u>	<u>Combined</u>
<u>Central District Council</u>			
BDP	54	46	49
<u>North East District Council</u>			
BDP - all	42	35	38
BDP - elected	33	57	46
BPP	36	56	48

¹ Mathangwane, which the BPP lost for a time when it failed to nominate a candidate in a by-election in 1967. See p. 199 below.

Table 2.5 (cont.)

	<u>Questions</u>	<u>Motions</u>	<u>Combined</u>
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
BDP - Session I	58	55	56
BDP - Session II	51	66	60
BDP - Total	55	59	57
BNF - Session II	33	45	40

Notes: (1) Figures for Central District Council and North East District Council cover both sessions.

(2) "BDP" means BDP elected Councillors unless otherwise indicated.

In explanation of the construction of this table, it should be mentioned first that there are but minor sessional variations in the figures between Sessions I and II in the Central and North East District Councils. There remains a point to be made concerning the BDP Councillors in the North East. While it may appear anomalous to include the nominated BDP Councillors in this particular table, there are two justifications for this: first, the bulk of Councillors on the BDP side are nominees, and, secondly, the nominated ones are in all cases readily identifiable with a ward. The majority of them were unsuccessful BDP candidates in local government elections (or in one case, subsequently became one);¹ they are thus "shadow" Councillors, aspiring to win the seat from the sitting People's Party Councillor. The remainder are Chiefs - officially termed Sub-Chiefs; the Kalanga term is She² - who are equally closely identified with a part of the District.³

1 One, elected as an Independent (in competition with a BDP candidate) in 1966, made the transfer via being a nominated Councillor in 1969 to standing for the Democratic Party in 1974.

2 Sub-Chief is the term employed by the government in the absence of a (Paramount) Chief in the Tati District.

3 They are in this respect different both from Chief's Representatives in the Tswana Clan system who can be transferred around the district, and Headmen who have a lesser status.

In interpreting the table, it is difficult to see any very definite conclusions that can be drawn about the impact of party. It is true that the BDP Councillors are more likely to ask "constituency" questions than the opposition parties, but with the reservation that this holds only if we take all BDP Councillors in the case of the North East District Council. Indeed the record of the elected Democratic Party Councillors in the North East is very close to that of the People's Party representatives, and both differ far more from the nominated BDP Councillors; with the North East the small number of Councillors involved makes too much generalisation hazardous until data is available over a much longer period. One other tentative conclusion can however be drawn, viz. that the effect of party competition is reflected in a relatively greater concentration on ward matters in motions as compared with questions. Thus the Central District in both sessions, and the Southern District in Session I, when there was a virtual absence of inter-party competition, show more interest in ward questions than ward motions; but the balance changes dramatically in Session II in the Southern District, when the BDP Councillors there come to reflect the greater relative concentration on constituency matters in motions rather than questions. But this is (a) on a different base in each case, and (b) holds only if one looks solely at the elected BDP Councillors in the case of the North East. So the overall conclusion is that differences between the parties exist, but do not fit into any simple explanation, rather depending on a contextual examination within each separate district.

Party concerns

The issues raised by Councillors in questions and motions in order of priority are analysed in Table 2.6. The table lists top five concerns in each case

TABLE 2.6

CONCERNS OF COUNCILLORS (all motions and questions)North East District Council

	<u>BDP (all)</u>		<u>BPP</u>
	{Education	1	Education
1	{ <u>Matimela</u>	2	Communications
	{Communications	3	Water
4	Central Gov't	4	<u>Matimela</u>
5	{Water	5	Revenue
	{Traditional		

Central District CouncilBDP

- 1 Education
- 2 Water
- 3 Health
- 4 Traditional
- 5 Ipelegeng

Southern District CouncilBDPBNF

- Session I
- 1 Water
 - 2 Education
 - 3 Traditional
 - 4 Livestock
 - 5 Revenue

- Session II
- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Water | 1 | Water |
| 2 | {Ethnic | 2 | Education |
| | {Planning | 3 | Communications |
| 4 | Communications | 4 | Traditional |
| 5 | Education | 5 | { <u>Matimela</u> |
| | | | {Health |

- Both Sessions
- 1 Water
 - 2 Education
 - 3 Traditional
 - 4 Ethnic
 - 5 Health

What is immediately apparent from Table 2.6 is that while the order of priority accorded the top five issues varies, there is a very considerable overlap between BDP and Opposition parties. Indeed no topic raised by BPP or BNF Councillors in this table fails to appear also as a BDP

concern. The consensus between the parties in a Council is greater than among the three Councils taken as entities. The Democratic Party Councillors on the other hand accord priority to several issues not regarded as so important by the Opposition parties. In addition to the question of Ipelegeng (which in this table includes not only self-help but the famine relief and Food-for-Work programmes) raised in 8% of the initiatives taken by Central District Councillors, there is the 9% of BDP initiatives in the North East concerned with the Central Government (i.e. normally a request for action and/or resources from Gaborone). And in the Southern District in the Second Session "Ethnic" (or Communal) questions and planning matters each account for 11% of initiatives. The reason for the former will emerge later, but the explanation for the latter (like the "Central Government" category mentioned in the North East) is the increasing interest shown in matters involving the allocation of resources, and in particular the impact of the new district-level planning system involving the crucial innovation of the District Development Committees. The specific issues of water, education and roads however are common to all, which is hardly surprising in an under-developed, semi-arid, sparsely populated country like Botswana.

Activity levels

If Councillors of all parties agree substantially on what the main areas of concern are, are they equally active in raising them? There are certain difficulties in measuring activity on a comparative basis among three Councils of such varying size. An additional problem is that, in addition to the statutory meetings (four per annum), some Councils have been more ready than others to call extraordinary meetings, the length of which vary.¹ The comparisons, then, are more enlightening

1 In addition one or two sets of minutes were unavailable, which reinforces the point. It also means that absolute figures are slightly on the low side.

for intra- than inter-Council purposes. The tables that follow derive an average activity level per Councillor by taking the number of questions and motions and dividing by the appropriate number of Councillors and years so as to produce an average annual rate of taking formal initiatives in full Council meetings.

TABLE 2.7

	<u>ACTIVITY LEVELS</u>		
	Session I	Session II	Both Sessions
<u>Central District Council</u>			
BDP*	3.8	0.4	1.7
<u>North East District Council</u>			
BDP	0.3	0.7	0.6
BPP	2.0	3.2	2.8
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
BDP	2.8	1.9	2.3
BNF	---	3.2	---

* The sole BPP Councillor who represented Mathangwane ward for part of Session I was around the average; his successor in Session II was bottom of the league.

From Table 2.7 some clear conclusions emerge. The first is that the absence of meaningful party competition in the Central District seemed to lead to complacency or at any rate a dramatic drop in the number of formal initiatives between the first and second sessions. Central District, often held up as a model to other Councils, appears to have rested on its early-won laurels.¹ By contrast the BDP in the Southern District, when there was keen inter-party rivalry, slackened off to a much lesser extent than was the case in the Central District, and ended up with a more active record than in the BDP in the largest Council. As far as the North East goes, the thesis is sustained, albeit in low key: the BDP Councillors became more active in the Second Session even if the total is not very impressive. It is worth adding that the

¹ Note that the BDP in Central District in the First Session have the highest level of activity.

activity level of nominated BDP Councillors is on the whole less than that of their elected colleagues; this lowers the BDP average. The question of non-elected Councillors will be dealt with later, but it can be pointed out here that their impact is not what might have been expected, in this field, on the ruling party.

The second point which emerges quite indisputably is that the opposition Councillors (when they are plural!)¹ are considerably more active than Councillors of the ruling party. They are between 1.7 and 6 times more active on motions and questions combined, and in one session almost 11 times more assiduous in tabling motions. Table 2.8 gives details.

TABLE 2.8

OPPOSITION MORE ACTIVE THAN BDP BY FACTOR OF:

	<u>Questions</u>	<u>Motions</u>	<u>Combined</u>
<u>North East District Council</u>			
(BPP:BDP)			
Session I	3.0	10.8	6.0
Session II	6.4	3.5	4.3
Both Sessions	5.2	4.4	4.7
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
(BNF:BDP)			
Session II	1.8	1.6	1.7

To complete the data, Table 2.9 breaks down the figures given in Table 2.7 into motions and questions. This again emphasises that there are no exceptions (other than the lone BPP Councillor in the Central District Council) to the rule just mentioned.

¹ See note for Table 2.7

TABLE 2.9

ACTIVITY LEVELS IN FORMAL INITIATIVES PER COUNCILLOR PER ANNUM

		<u>Questions</u>	<u>Motions</u>	<u>Combined</u>
<u>Central District Council</u>				
BDP	Session I	2.2	1.6	3.8
	Session II	0.2	0.2	0.4
	Both Sessions	1.0	0.8	1.7
<u>North East District Council</u>				
BDP	Session I	0.2	0.1	0.3
	Session II	0.2	0.5	0.7
	Both Sessions	0.2	0.4	0.6
BPP	Session I	0.6	1.4	2.0
	Session II	1.4	1.8	3.2
	Both Sessions	1.1	1.7	2.8
<u>Southern District Council</u>				
BDP	Session I	1.1	1.7	2.8
	Session II	0.7	1.2	1.9
	Both Sessions	0.9	1.4	2.3
BNF	Session II	1.3	1.9	3.2

The argument that the Opposition are merely compensating by "back-bench initiatives" for their lack of influence on committees and the top offices of the Council will be examined later; suffice it to point out that "power sharing" is an established feature of the North East District Council even if it was a late development in the Southern District Council. Finally the point about greater Opposition activity holds if only elected Councillors are taken into account, although the difference is slightly reduced, due to the lower public activity level of appointed Councillors.

In assessing the significance of the above conclusions it can be assumed that the traditional consensus approach to politics gives the more active Councillors an advantage in getting their initiatives accepted, whether as matters of policy or of ward concern; this tends to benefit Opposition Councillors, owing to their generally higher level

of activity. It is argued moreover that the question of activity levels is not solely an individual matter but that inter-party competition has an effect. Putting it the other way round, the absence of party competition seems to reduce the volume of inputs completely, something which is not altered by the nomination of additional Councillors who support the Government of the day.

Two explanations have been offered to account for these twin phenomena. One is that Councillors started off - and this is argued particularly for the Central District Council - with rather grandiose ideas of a mini-parliament with themselves cast in the role of People's Tribune but gradually realised that the passing of motions which, for various reasons, were not implemented had limited value: in other words there was a shift from a quantitative to a qualitative contribution. While the argument sounds plausible it does not answer the objection that a similar switch of emphasis ought to have occurred elsewhere, but did not. Moreover, as is detailed in Chapter 4, the general performance of Central District Councillors was the subject of continuing criticism from the Council Secretary, and this continued after his translation to a Cabinet post. The second - and in fact complementary - explanation is that BDP Councillors were rather different in their outlook from the BPP (and to a lesser extent the BNF): almost apolitical beings, who were spurred into public activity as exhibited in formal initiatives only by the example of the Opposition Councillors, who generally enjoyed using the Council as a platform from which to express their "agin the Government" position. This difference in temperament does not exactly contradict the "slide towards a qualitative contribution" or "growing of sophistication" interpretation but suggests that rather different objectives were pursued - instinctively, perhaps - by the two sides.

Solidarity

It will have been noted nevertheless, from what has already been said, that Council behaviour cannot be explained solely in terms of the party factor. One indicator of party cohesion is the support given to motions: is it predominantly, normally or not particularly the case that a motion is proposed and seconded by Councillors from the same party? Moreover do any variants occur according to the party identity of the prime mover?

TABLE 2.10

SUPPORT FOR MOTIONS (in percentages)

	<u>Proposed by</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>	
		<u>same party</u>	<u>different party</u>
<u>North East District Council</u>			
<u>(both Sessions)</u>	all	61	39
	BDP	75	25
	BPP	54	46
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
<u>(Session II)</u>	all	68	32
	BDP	64	36
	BNF	71	29

Note: Table 2.10 gives figures for those motions (roughly two-thirds) where both proposer and seconder are minuted.

From Table 2.10 emerges the not surprising finding that motions were more likely to be seconded by a member of the same party than of the other party. What is interesting is the fact that solidarity fell far short of 100%, ranging from 54% to 71%. This means that party is a far from reliable factor in explaining the fate of motions in the full Council meetings, and a fortiori for proceedings in committee. In the categories listed in the table, the BDP Councillors in the North East seconded 46% of the motions tabled by the BPP Opposition, which is about as near to consensus politics as one could get. At the other end of the spectrum and the country, the BDP in the Southern District supported

only 29% of the BNF motions, indicating - rather contrary to the relative policy cleavage between BDP and Opposition in these two Councils - a greater degree of party-based behaviour. The infrequency of caucussing by the parties, to which numerous interviewees testified, is thus borne out by this evidence.

The next point to be investigated is the extent to which party solidarity is related to the nature of the motions tabled. Putting it another way, is bipartisan sponsorship of a motion more likely when "ward" matters are involved in a motion rather than "general" matters, which are more likely to involve policy questions? The data on this indicates a different pattern in the North East from the Southern District, but this comparison is somewhat unreliable owing to the fact that in the North East a high proportion of "ward" matters have no recorded seconder; the most likely explanation is that many such motions were referred to committee or dealt with administratively and hence were not formally debated. Bearing this proviso in mind, the figures are as follows:

TABLE 2.11

MOTIONS: PROPORTION (percentage) OF MOTIONS
DEALING WITH "WARD" MATTERS BY SPONSORSHIP

	<u>Tabled by:</u>	<u>Seconded by:</u>		<u>Factor</u>
		(a)	(b)	[(a) ÷ (b)]
		same party	different party	
<u>North East District Council*</u>				
(both sessions)	BDP*	20	33	0.6
	BPP	22	22	1.0
	all	21	25	0.8
<u>Southern District Council</u>				
(Session II)	BDP	72	44	1.6
	BNF	51	29	1.8
	all	60	36	1.7

* includes nominated Councillors

The conclusion for the North East District is that motions sponsored by the same party were marginally less likely to be concerned with "ward" matters. In the Southern District Council, on the other hand, and where the data is fuller, quite the opposite is the case: motions sponsored by both parties were much more likely to concern general than ward matters. The conclusion suggested by the data, viz. that relations between BDP and Opposition are different in the two Councils, confirms the postulate of significant differences between the National Front and the People's Party, or, more accurately, in the BDP Councillors' attitude towards them.

Success and failure

It has already been noted that votes on motions are rare, and outright rejection likewise. Nevertheless the motions which were rejected and/or voted upon are worthy of some examination, not least to see whether the ruling Democratic Party tends to use its majority primarily against Opposition Councillors or whether party lines are blurred in this as in other aspects of Council behaviour. Again the North East District, and Session II of the Southern District, provide the only strictly relevant data. Taking first unsuccessful motions, Table 2.12 gives the figures.

TABLE 2.12

UNSUCCESSFUL MOTIONS (two-party situation)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BPP</u>	<u>BNF</u>	<u>"Ward"</u> <u>matters</u>
<u>North East District Council</u> (both Sessions)	3	2	1	-	nil
<u>Southern District Council</u> (Session II)	13	4	-	9	31%

Notes: Two of the motions in the North East had a tied vote, with the Chairman declining to use his casting vote; two of these had a seconder of another party. In the Southern District, three motions failed for want of a seconder; one of the BNF motions had a BDP seconder.

TABLE 2.13MOTIONS SUCCESSFUL AFTER A VOTE (two-party situation)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BPP</u>	<u>Ind</u>	<u>"Ward" matters</u>
<u>North East District Council</u> (both Sessions)	6	3	2	1	nil
<u>Southern District Council</u>	nil	-	-	-	-

Note: Two motions (including that tabled by the sole Independent) had a seconder of another party.

The limited evidence recorded in these two tables at least demonstrates the absence of a hard party line on motions, whether tabled by the majority party or the Opposition. In this respect therefore the pattern in a two-party situation was not all that different from the position in a one-party Council,¹ which is discussed below.

Committee membership and office

The position is quite different where the question of the Chairmanship or Vice-Chairmanship of the Council, and the membership of committees are concerned. It is this question which is for most Councillors the key one for party behaviour, and it is therefore no surprise to find that caucussing before the annual round of elections is, as far as can be ascertained, universal. There are two main reasons for this, involving the allocation of two kinds of resources. The primary one is that status is involved, and this is still seen, in the post-traditional era in Botswana, as the main goal of local government. Secondly, there is the financial perquisite of allowances for the Chairman and also for attendance at committee meetings, as well as related expenses. The function of committees as policy or decision-makers is perceived as secondary to these two features.

1 In this category is included the period when the Central District Council had one BPP Councillor.

A dramatic difference is revealed by comparing data from the Southern District Council (Session II) with the North East District Council. The first three annual rounds of committee elections in the former resulted in 100% BDP membership of the main Council committees (although from February 1971 onwards some BNF Councillors were elected to "outside" committees on which the Council was represented),¹ and it was only in the last two years of the Second Session that the BNF had representation (one member) on each of the main Council committees. In statistical terms, a "backbench" Democratic Party Councillor had a ten times better chance of election to a (main) Council committee than a National Front Councillor. By contrast the People's Party Councillors in the North East achieved a representation virtually identical with their share of the Council seats (although not of course reflecting their clear majority of seats in the Local Government Elections), and was even successful once in getting a BPP Chairman for the Council; twice a BPP Councillor was elected Vice-Chairman. The North East pattern was therefore ab initio one of power sharing, with the BDP relying on either or both the sole Independent Councillor (in the First Session) and the Chairmanship of committees to give them control if matters came to a vote. More will be said about the reasons underlying the apparently co-operative approach prevalent in the North East in a later section. Finally, it may be noted that in the Central District, which had a lone BPP Councillor for most of the two sessions, the BDP committee membership was a BDP monopoly until a year before the Second Session ended, when the BPP Councillor got a seat on the Community & Economic Development Committee.

1 And eventually had a majority on an ad hoc committee to investigate the recovery of bad debts!

The reasons behind the different levels of Opposition representation in the three Councils need a brief explanation here. In the early days of the Central District Council the first BPP Councillor to form the one-man Opposition declined nomination to committees and resigned mid-way through the First Session; the BDP then took the seat unopposed. His BPP successor however wished to serve on committees and in fact protested that his exclusion was proof of a partisan approach to committee membership by the BDP; subsequently the majority party relented and elected him to the Community & Economic Development Committee.

In the North East however the BPP participated fully in elections in the First Session and was able to ally itself tactically with an Independent elected Councillor for a while to prevent any steamrolling by the BDP. At the beginning of the Second Session however the BPP, in the North East as elsewhere, walked out in protest against the Government's packing of the Council with extra nominees (most of them defeated candidates). The BNF did the same at the same juncture in the Southern District. But whereas the BDP reacted in the South by electing solidly BDP committees, the BDP in the North East elected BPP Councillors in absentia to a fair proportion of seats. Here again one sees the difference in attitude towards the two Opposition parties by the BDP: in the South, resentful and suspicious of the new challenge (backed by all the influence of the ex-Paramount Chief of the Bangwaketse), but in the North East accepting the right of the BPP - which demonstrably had a substantial majority of the electorate behind it - to a reasonable share of Committee office. It took some time before a more relaxed attitude began to prevail in the Southern District as the BNF threat to the BDP appeared to recede.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR

If party membership is a less than reliable indicator of Councillors' behaviour, it might be supposed that geography is a more potent one. Vengroff¹ has detected networks of communications amongst Kweneng District Councillors apparently based on geographical groupings of wards. This section examines the extent to which Councillors combine on a geographical basis to achieve certain objectives. In particular the District Councils are analysed from the perspective of district centre-periphery relations, to see whether the more remote/disadvantaged areas show signs of greater dissatisfaction, and also to determine whether in any sense the "central" Councillors (with special reference to those from the constituencies including the district headquarters, i.e. Kanye North and South, and Serowe North and South) are more powerful than those from more remote parts of the district. Because of the small size of the North East District (which covers less than two parliamentary constituencies), this study will confine itself to the Central and Southern Districts; another reason is that the centre of the North East District is Francistown, which is not part of the North East District Council area. The Southern District also provides a useful case in which to examine the impact of party politics in Session II, and thus make possible an assessment of the relative importance of the geographical and party factors.

Ward matters

The hypothesis that Councillors representing remote Polling Districts are more likely to raise ward questions than those from the centre is borne out by an analysis of the data, although the correspondence

1 R. Vengroff, "Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana" (1972) Ch. III

between degree of remoteness and degree of concern with local issues is not complete in the case of Central District. In Table 2.14 constituencies¹ are ranked in reverse order of remoteness, i.e. starting at Serowe and Kanye for the Central and Southern Districts respectively. (There is of course a degree of arbitrariness in the order in which some constituencies appear, depending in particular on whether the centres of each constituency are taken or the pattern of communications; the formula adopted is based mainly on the former, but taking the latter into account to rank several constituencies the centres of which are approximately the same distance from the district capital.)

TABLE 2.14

PERCENTAGE OF WARD MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS,
ranked by constituencies in inverse order of remoteness

	<u>questions</u>	<u>motions</u>	<u>combined</u>
<u>Central District Council</u>			
(both Sessions)			
Serowe South	33	37	36
Serowe North	37	33	36
Tswapong North	57	60	56
Mmadinare	58	50	56
Mahalapye	40	36	37
Shoshong	47	65	56
Tswapong South	40	33	38
Tonota	59	45	51
Bobirwa	82	60	74
Boteti	53	39	49
Nkange	77	33	69
Sebinas & Gweta	68	80	72
Total	55	47	51
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
Session I			
Kanye South	50	26	32
Kanye North	56	33	39
Moshupa	33	50	49
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	0	64	59
Lobatse/Barolong*	70	89	83
Total	58	55	56

1 Each of which contains more than one "ward" (strictly, Polling District).

Table 2.14 (cont.)

<u>Southern District Council</u>	<u>questions</u>	<u>motions</u>	<u>combined</u>
<u>Session II</u>			
Kanye South	7	28	22
Kanye North	29	39	34
Moshupa	60	59	60
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	55	66	62
Lobatse/Barolong*	44	89	74
Total	41	54	49
 <u>Both Sessions</u>			
Kanye South	12	27	24
Kanye North	34	36	35
Moshupa	50	54	53
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	53	66	61
Lobatse/Barolong*	58	89	79
Total	48	55	52

* The Barolong part of the constituency only

The data demonstrates conclusively the much greater degree of parochialism in the rural areas compared with the centre of district administration, which in the case of Southern District is exactly double: 62% of initiatives from rural areas concerned with ward questions compared with 31% for Kanye. The "metropolitan - provincial" syndrome is only slightly less marked in the Central District, the comparable figures being 56% to 36%. There the semi-urban Mahalapye constituency behaves more like Serowe than the truly "rural" parts of the district¹ while Tswapong South, totally rural, does not fit the pattern, nor - albeit to a lesser extent - does the remote Boteti constituency. Nevertheless, the pattern is sufficiently clear for the hypothesis to stand.

Activity levels

Given that the remoter constituencies are more concerned with ward matters, the next question to be examined is whether they are relatively more active in Council than their colleagues from the

¹ If the Mahalapye figures are deducted from the "rural" areas, the differential widens to 59%:36%.

district capital. Table 2.15 ranks the constituencies in order according to the number of formal initiatives recorded for each, divided by the number of Councillors for each constituency (since the number varies); the constituencies are again listed according to their proximity to district headquarters.

TABLE 2.15

ACTIVITY LEVELS OF COUNCILLORS BY CONSTITUENCIES
rank order of activity

	<u>questions</u>	<u>motions</u>	<u>combined</u>
<u>Central District Council</u>			
Both Sessions			
Serowe South	3	1	1
Serowe North	5	8=	5
Tswapong North	10	6	10
Mmadinare	2	8=	3
Mahalapye	11	2	7
Shoshong	8	5	8
Tswapong South	12	12	12
Tonota	9	3	6
Bobirwa	4	7	4
Boteti	1	4	2
Nkange	7	11	11
Sebinas & Gweta	6	10	9
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
Session I (BDP only)			
Kanye South	5	4=	5
Kanye North	2	1	1
Moshupa	3	2=	3
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	4	2=	4
Lobatse/Barolong*	1	4=	2
Session II (BDP and BNF)			
Kanye South	3	2	3
Kanye North	2	3	2
Moshupa	4	5	5
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	1	1	1
Lobatse/Barolong*	5	4	4
Both Sessions			
Kanye South	4	2=	3
Kanye North	2	2=	2
Moshupa	5	5	5
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	1	1	1
Lobatse/Barolong*	3	4	4

* The Barolong part of the constituency only

Two facts emerge from the data on the Southern District. The first (which is shared with the Central District) is that there is no obvious connexion between distance from the centre and levels of activity. The second point is the change between Sessions I and II (in the Southern District), which reveals a fairly definite connexion between party and activity levels, as the BNF representation is predominant in Kanye, strong in Nwaketse/Kgalagadi,¹ but weak in Moshupa and non-existent in Lobatse/Barolong. The conclusion therefore is that, while party is an influential factor on activity levels, the impact of the geographical factor on levels of activity (as opposed to the nature of such activity) is slight, and secondary in importance to individual factors.

Cohesion

It has been shown that Councillors representing peripheral areas are more concerned with ward questions but not necessarily more active than their "central" colleagues. The next question to be answered is whether Councillors frequently combine on a geographical basis to sponsor motions, whether any variations encountered bear a relationship to the degree of remoteness from the district capital, and whether such cohesion is linked to the nature of the motion (i.e. ward or general matters).

The figures for the Central and Southern Districts are respectively 23% and 26% of motions sponsored by Councillors from the same constituency. In the Southern District the breakdown between Sessions I and II is 33% and 23% respectively. The problem is how to evaluate these

1 The exceptional level of activity of one BDP Councillor (in Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi) is reflected in the position of that constituency in the table and illustrates again the impact of an individual.

figures. On the one hand they fall far short of the 100%¹ which would indicate total solidarity on a constituency basis; on the other hand a purely random pattern of combination, i.e. one in which constituency was not a factor either way would presumably produce a very low figure of cohesion, averaging 16% for the Southern District and 5% for the Central District.² Thus if constituency exerts any positive influence the figure would be above the quota just mentioned. Accordingly Table 2.16 lists constituencies in order of cohesion, indicating also whether they are above or below average and the quota.

TABLE 2.16

RANK ORDER OF COHESION IN SPONSORING MOTIONS, BY CONSTITUENCY COLLEAGUES

	<u>Session I</u>	<u>Session II</u>	<u>Both Sessions</u>
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
Above average	1 Lobatse/ Barolong 2 Ngwaketse/ Kgalagadi	1 Kanye North 2 Moshupa	1 Lobatse/ Barolong 2 Ngwaketse/ Kgalagadi
Average		3 Ngwaketse/ Kgalagadi	3 Kanye North
Above quota	3 Kanye South	4 Lobatse/ Barolong 5 Kanye South	4 Kanye South
Below quota	4 Kanye North 5 Moshupa		5 Moshupa

1 This figure could never be achieved for Central District Council owing to occasional vacancies/absences from two-member constituencies.

2 Whereas for party (in the Southern and North East Districts) the figure would be nearer 50%.

Table 2.16 (cont.)

	<u>Session I</u>	<u>Session II</u>	<u>Both Sessions</u>
<u>Central District Council</u>			
Above average			1 Mahalapye 2 Serowe North 3 Shoshong
Above quota			4 Sebinas & Gweta 5 Bobirwa 6 Boteti
Below quota			7 Tonota (Serowe South {Tswapong North 8 {Mmadinare {Tswapong South {Nkange

It is apparent then that constituency cohesion varies considerably (from 61% for Mahalapye, Central District, to zero) and that there is no clear connexion with distance from the district capital. The figures for Kanye and the rest of the Southern District are respectively 23% and 28%,¹ for Serowe and the rest of Central District 19% and 24%. This indicates in both Councils slightly greater cohesion in the outlying constituencies, but it is still considerably less than the weighting given by the two groups of constituencies to ward matters.

Given the degree of cohesion outlined, the final question to be determined here is the extent to which constituency sponsorship of motions was based on the pursuit of local interests. Here the two Councils provide different answers. In the Southern District, motions seconded by a Councillor from the same constituency were more concerned with ward matters than those seconded by a Councillor from a different constituency in four cases (constituencies) out of five,² and by a

1 For Session I and II the figures are 20%:39% and 24%:23% respectively. The former was a single party situation while in the latter there was a strong BNF minority.

2 Moshupa being the exception.

margin of 66% to 46%.¹ In the Central District, by contrast, the figures are 36% to 45%: i.e. ward questions were more frequently contained in motions seconded from a different constituency than the same constituency! Thus whatever validity Vengroff's² "network" theory has for the Kweneng, it does not appear to hold, as far as the joint pursuit of local interests goes, for the Central District, where Councillors from only two constituencies³ combined to raise ward matters in motions.

Success/failure with motions

The number of motions rejected is, as has been noted, small. This makes an examination of them interesting but also somewhat risky for generalisation. At any rate, Table 2.17 lists the number of unsuccessful motions by constituencies.

TABLE 2.17

UNSUCCESSFUL MOTIONS

Central District Council

	<u>Both Sessions</u>	
	<u>Number of unsuccessful motions</u>	<u>Number concerning ward matters</u>
Serowe South	7	0
Mahalapye	7	2
Mmadinare	3	1
Serowe North	2	0
Shoshong	2	1
Sebinas & Gweta	2	1
Tonota	1	1
Boteti	1	0

1 The figures for Session I and II are respectively 79% : 45% and 57% : 46%.

2 R. Vengroff, op. cit.

3 Serowe North and Sebinas & Gweta - at opposite ends of the "remoteness" spectrum.

Table 2.17 (cont.)

Southern District Council

	<u>Session I</u>		<u>Session II</u>		<u>Both Sessions</u>	
	<u>unsucc.</u> <u>mot.</u>	<u>Ward</u> <u>matters</u>	<u>unsucc.</u> <u>mot.</u>	<u>ward</u> <u>matters</u>	<u>unsucc.</u> <u>mot.</u>	<u>ward</u> <u>matters</u>
Kanye North	7	3	5	1	12	4
Kanye South	5	1	4	1	9	2
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	4	3	4	2	8	2
Lobatse/Barolong	4	1	0	-	4	1
Moshupa	2	0	0	-	2	0

If any conclusion can be put forward from this table, it is the negative one that no marked central domination of Council proceedings is manifest in public rejection of motions concerned with local amenities. More meaningful conclusions must await the chapters on the individual Councils.

Committee membership

Nevertheless it can be argued that domination of committees enables the central Councillors to exert an undue amount of influence, and so this is the next question to be examined. Table 2.18 lists constituencies by proximity to the centre, and indicates in descending order the number of committee¹ seats per Councillor per annum.

TABLE 2.18

REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES:
rank order of Councillors listed by constituencies
in inverse order of remoteness

<u>Central District Council</u>		<u>Southern District Council</u>	
<u>Both Sessions</u>		<u>Both Sessions</u>	
Serowe South	1	Kanye South	4
Serowe North	2	Kanye North	5
Tswapong North	5	Moshupa	1
Mmadinare	3	Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	3
Mahalapye	6=	Lobatse/Barolong	2
Shoshong	4		
Tswapong South	10		
Tonota	9		
Bobirwa	8		
Boteti	12		
Nkange	6=		
Sebinas & Gweta	11		

¹ Main (standing) committees only.

Table 2.18 shows a fairly strong correspondence between proximity to the centre and representation on committees for the Central District,¹ with the nearest six constituencies in the top six places in the league of committee membership: the position in the Southern District on the other hand appears to indicate a weak negative correlation. However the dramatic change in the geographical distribution of seats in the Southern District between Sessions I and II shown in Table 2.19 provides a clear indication of the interplay of different factors.

TABLE 2.19

IMPACT OF PARTY ON GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES

Southern District Council

<u>order of proximity to centre</u>	<u>order of representation on committees</u>		<u>Strength of BDP in constituency (Session II): rank order</u>
	<u>Session I</u> (one party)	<u>Session II</u> (two parties)	
Kanye South	2	4	4
Kanye North	1	5	5
Moshupa	3	3	2
Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	4	2	3
Lobatse/Barolong	5	1	1

The conclusion then is clear: in the absence of inter-party competition the centre/periphery distribution of seats on committees was very similar in Central and Southern Districts, and operated against the periphery; but as soon as inter-party competition became a feature (in the Southern District), the party factor became the determining one. The factor by which the district capital exceeded the outlying areas was 2.25 for Central District,² which compares with 1.5 for the First Session in Southern District; for Session II the outlying

1 Variations between Session I and II do not affect the overall pattern significantly.

2 For Session I it was 2.8; it went down in Session II to 2.0.

areas exceeded Kanye's representation by a factor of 3.9. In this context it must be emphasised that committee membership (and other office in the Council) is the question which interests Councillors most.

PARTY AND GEOGRAPHY

To bring the threads together, an attempt must be made to assess the relative importance of party and geographical factors, as revealed in the aggregate data. There are considerable difficulties inherent in this task but, at the risk of oversimplification, a schematic presentation may nevertheless be an aid to clarity.

TABLE 2.20

	Party	Geography (constituency)
Concern with ward matters	Varies, but connexion	Correspondence with remoteness
Activity	Opposition more active than BDP	No clear pattern; weak correspondence with proximity to centre
Cohesion	Medium	Weaker but still discernible; no discernible connexion with remoteness
Committee membership	Strong connexion; in NEDC fair representation, but in SDC (Session II) Opposition under-represented	In one-party situation definite correspondence with proximity to centre
Success/failure with (formal) motions	No obvious connexion	No correspondence with centre-versus-periphery

The general conclusion is that the importance of the two variables varies with different aspects of Councillors' behaviour, but that party is rather more significant overall. But neither category comes anywhere near 100% of (potential) cohesion. The clearest test case is the pattern of sponsorship of motions in the Southern District in Session II. Table 2.21 indicates the difference between the actual and expected (on a neutral or random basis) proportion of support by party and constituency; it should be mentioned that in all but one case each constituency followed the same general pattern.

TABLE 2.21

SPONSORSHIP OF MOTIONS, SOUTHERN DISTRICT, SESSION II
actual less expected percentages

	P A R T Y		
	same	different	
<u>All (elected)</u> <u>Councillors</u>	+13	- 7	same diff.
	+ 9	-14	
<u>BDP</u>	+16	- 9	same diff.
	- 9	+ 3	
<u>BNF</u>	+10	- 4	same diff.
	+25	-30	

C O N S T I T U E N C Y

In summary, the percentages by which motions seconded by (a) the same party, (b) the same constituency exceeded the "neutral" (or

1 N.B. it is of course the party which seconds the motion which thereby reveals its attitude towards the issue involved and the question of bi-partisan co-operation.

expected) figure are:

	<u>Same party</u>	<u>Same constituency</u>
All	+22	+ 6
BDP	+ 7	+ 7
BNF	+35	+ 6

The answer to the question - which is more important, party or geography? - is that both may affect the pattern simultaneously but that party is overall of somewhat greater importance. This makes it extremely difficult to produce any kind of model for the way decisions concerning the allocation of resources are taken, and gives added importance to the case studies which are presented in the remainder of Part One.

NON-ELECTED COUNCILLORS

But first, the role of the non-elected Councillors must be scrutinised, for various reasons. Firstly, they have generally been omitted from the treatment of the Central and Southern Districts, although (for reasons explained earlier) warranting inclusion in consideration of the North East District Council. Secondly, their appointment has been both an integral part of the original scheme¹ - and their role has indeed been strengthened as time has gone on - as providing an opportunity for the Government of the day to appoint talented individuals and traditional leaders, and controversial in being used to upset election results by giving the national governing party control of all Councils. The main questions therefore are, who are the nominated Councillors, how active are they, and how influential? One has further to distinguish between the traditional leaders, particularly the (Paramount) Chiefs who were originally ex officio Chairmen and later ex officio members, of the Council, and the

1 See below, pp. 397-398

others, who could be described as "political" or "other" nominees. The political nature of nomination is illustrated by the fact that most BDP candidates who had stood unsuccessfully in the local government elections were subsequently rewarded with a seat on the Council to which they had just failed to be elected: otherwise there is little to distinguish the type of person nominated by the Government to the three Councils from BDP candidates other than the distinction between what are termed aristocratic and "other" or "political" nominees. One feature of the nominated system as it has worked out over time is the increase in importance of the non-traditional nominees as against the Chiefs, and the decline of the contribution made by the nominees (per head) relative to the elected Councillors. If they were thus seen as a temporary measure to help Councils on to their feet while less experienced elected Councillors gained experience their use might be justified; there is however no sign that they are anything other than a permanent feature of Councils.

"Ward representatives"

As has been argued earlier, the nominated Councillors in the North East can be identified with specific wards, whereas this cannot be said for their opposite numbers in the other two Councils. Table 2.22 indicates the extent to which the nominated Councillors were concerned with specific local matters.

TABLE 2.22

NEDC: NOMINATED COUNCILLORS (COMPARED WITH ELECTED MEMBERS): PERCENTAGE OF INITIATIVES CONCERNED WITH "WARD" MATTERS

	<u>questions</u>	<u>motions</u>	<u>combined</u>
All nominees	50	25	33
Chiefs	0	0	0
Other nominees	60	33	43
BDP elected Councillors	33	57	46
BPP elected Councillors	36	56	48

It is evident from these figures that non-elected Councillors were more concerned with local matters in questions but less in motions than their elected colleagues, and overall much less concerned with local matters. The Shès (Chiefs or sub-Chiefs) took no formal initiatives concerning their wards whatsoever. The main concerns of the North Eastern nominated Councillors were (i) Central Government and communications (roads and bridges); (ii) education and matimela.

Activity levels

The rationale for the practice of nominating Councillors is that it enables seats to be given to individuals of higher calibre than the average elected Councillor, whether experienced traditional leaders or political or business leaders. It might therefore reasonably be expected that they would be more active than their elected colleagues. Democratic theory by contrast might lead one to expect that Councillors who are not accountable to the electorate, nor dependent on the voters for their reëlection, would be less assiduous in raising questions and tabling motions on behalf of district inhabitants generally or their local fellow-citizens in particular. Table 2.23 demonstrates conclusively that the activity level of nominated Councillors taken as a group - whether traditional or "political" - is below that of elected Councillors. The figures are of course aggregate: some individual nominated Councillors were more active than some elected members. Moreover the activity level of the elected BDP Councillors as a category is higher than that of the nominated members: it is not only the higher degree of Opposition activity which accounts for the difference.

TABLE 2.23

ACTIVITY LEVELS OF NOMINATED COUNCILLORS
expressed as percentage of average activity level of elected Councillors

	<u>questions</u>	<u>motions</u>	<u>combined</u>
Central District Council	0	53	24
North East District Council	22	30	27
Southern District Council			
Session I	0	20	12
Session II	36	72	60
Both Sessions	24	47	38

Note: The relatively strong contribution of nominated Councillors in tabling motions in the Second Session of the Southern District Council reflects the prominent part played by two ex-MPs, defeated in the 1969 General Election, but is still insufficient to raise the group average to that of elected Councillors.

How is one to interpret these figures? Two possibilities suggest themselves: first, the "democratic" explanation advanced above; second, the "backbench" theory, according to which the leading members of the Council do not need to take as many formal initiatives because they are on the inner track. Some support for the latter interpretation is provided by the lower level of activity in asking questions compared with the tabling of motions. The next question to be explored therefore is committee membership and the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Committee membership

The first point to note is that the position of Chairman has normally been occupied by a nominated member in all three cases. When Councils were first established, the Chiefs (or to be technical the Tribal Authorities or Acting Tribal Authorities)¹ of the Bangwato and

¹ The Setswana term "kgosi" is used generally for all three terms Chief, Tribal (formerly African) Authority and Acting Tribal Authority.

the Bangwaketse¹ were made ex officio Chairmen of the Central and Ngwaketse (later renamed Southern) Districts respectively. In the North East District leading Sub-Chief Ramokate and Mr. G. E. N. Mannothisoko, who was a nominated member in Session II, have between them held the position of Chairman for most of the time; three elected Councillors, from both parties, were however successful on one occasion each. To a lesser extent this was true also of the post of Vice-Chairman, where nominated Councillors although not dominating the post were disproportionately well represented.

Representation on committees was not complicated by ex officio appointments; the position there is thus clearer, and the representation of nominated Councillors all the more noteworthy. On the whole the number of committee seats to which nominated Councillors were elected was greater per capita than those to which elected Councillors were elected. Taking both sessions, seats given to nominated Councillors expressed as a percentage of the seats given to elected Councillors (per capita) ranged from 142% in Southern District through 111% in the North East District to only 95% in Central District; the last figure is a "fair" one given the domination by nominated Councillors of the position of Council Chairman. These figures however disguise differences between the levels of representation achieved by "traditional" (aristocratic) as opposed to other or "political" nominated Councillors, and further hide the fairly striking trends manifested between the first and second Sessions. Table 2.24 therefore breaks these figures down.

1 The Chief of the Barolong, the other clan in the Southern District, was nominated for both Sessions but was never Chairman.

TABLE 2.24

NUMBER OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES HELD BY NOMINATED COUNCILLORS
EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGE OF SEATS HELD BY ELECTED COUNCILLORS
 (per capita, per annum)

	<u>Session I</u>	<u>Session II</u>	<u>Both Sessions</u>
<u>Central District Council</u>			
All nominated	197	36	95
Aristocratic	263	18	105
Political	154	48	84
<u>North East District Council</u>			
All nominated	78	143	111
Aristocratic	78	194	136
Political	78	131	105
<u>Southern District Council</u>			
All nominated	188	127	142
Aristocratic	307	46	150
Political	148	153	139

Several observations are prompted by these figures. In the first place, nominated Councillors as a whole achieved a position of relative over-representation on committees (compared with elected Councillors) in two out of the three Councils, and the aristocratic nominated Councillors in all three cases achieved greater per capita representation than either elected Councillors or "political" nominated Councillors. However this aristocratic dominance fell away sharply in two of the three Councils (the exception being the North East, where, paradoxically perhaps, the number of Chiefs on the Council dropped considerably), yet these two Councils are generally regarded as very traditionally minded. Clearly the "new men" takeover" theory holds good here.

To complete the picture as regards the representation of non-elected Councillors, attention must be directed to the important positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Councils. Leaving aside the ex officio representation of the Chief as Chairman of Central and Southern (then Ngwaketse) Districts in Session I, it is interesting to note the varied fortunes of aristocratic and political nominated

Councillors for these elected offices. The position is complicated. At one extreme, an elected Councillor has never presided over either Central or Southern District; at the other, no non-elected Councillor has yet been successful in standing for election to the post of Vice-Chairman of the Central District. In aggregate and absolute figures, nominated Councillors held 59% of these two elected posts (for the three Councils), which if not a clean sweep by the non-elected element is certainly a very high degree of dominance. Moreover it rises to 88% for the post of Chairman, compared with 38% for Vice-Chairman. Aristocratic members accounted for 32% share of the chairmanship, compared with only 12% for the vice-chairmanship. One could summarise the position as one of strong leadership by nominated Councillors, both traditional and political. Table 2.25 gives details for the three Councils taken together.

TABLE 2.25

CHAIRMANSHIP AND VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP OF COUNCILS:
SHARE BY NOMINATED AND ELECTED COUNCILLORS (percentages)

	<u>Nominated Councillors</u>			<u>Elected Councillors</u>		
	<u>all</u>	<u>aristocratic</u>	<u>political</u>	<u>BDP</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>all</u>
Chairman*	88	32	56	5	7	12
Vice-Chairman	38	12	26	46	16	62
Both*	59	21	38	29	12	41

* when elective

In concluding on the subject of non-elected Councillors, it can be said that the data supports the "front-bench v. back-bench" hypothesis, i.e. that those on the inner track resort to fewer formal initiatives (especially questions) because they have less need to do so. Unfortunately for the theory, however, amongst elected Councillors (and having due regard for the party factor previously analysed) the

case is not proven: there are indications indeed that the opposite may be the case, i.e. the less active Councillors are less highly regarded by their colleagues, and thus not particularly successful in standing for election to committees.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT COUNCIL¹

The Southern District is the second largest in terms of population of Botswana's nine districts and, although only two hours' drive by car from the capital, does not normally look to Gaborone for the provision of services other than those involving the central government. As the earlier name of the Council implies, it is dominated by the Bangwaketse clan, who make up 87% of the District's population,² the balance being provided by the Barolong with 13%. The area inhabited by the former - known correctly as Gangwaketse - however, including as it does a slice of the Kgalagadi (Kalahari) semi-desert, accounts for 96% of the Southern District while the smaller area, inhabited by the Barolong and known as Borolong or the Barolong Farms,³ makes up only 4% of the area. Gangwaketse was originally scheduled to form a district on its own, the Barolong being assigned to the South East District (which also included the Balete⁴ and Batlokwa clans).⁵ However, in the words of the first Minister of Local Government,

1 The name "Southern District Council" (SDC) will be used for the whole period from 1966 to 1974, although the name Ngwaketse District was invariably used until the end of 1970 and still survives in various publications.

2 I.e. the population of the Ngwaketse Census District. Within this area there are a number of septs, including Bakgalagadi and émigrés Bakgatla - who are not "nuclear" Bangwaketse but acknowledge the Bangwaketse Chief as Paramount.

3 The Barolong Census District.

4 Or Bamalete

5 Bechuanaland Protectorate, Report of Local Government Committee, April 1964, p. 2.

Following deliberations in the Bangwaketse and Barolong Tribal kgotlas, and after further discussions with the chiefs of these two tribes, it became clear that the logical form of development in this area was to include the Barolong farms with the Ngwaketse Tribal territory. . . . There have always been very close ties of friendship and affinity between the Barolong and Bangwaketse tribes and I am sure that this new arrangement must be pleasing to all the people in these areas.¹

Perhaps as a concession to the smaller clan, the Barolong Farms ended up with one more seat than their population would have entitled them to (four out of twentyfour; three out of twentythree would have been their exact due).

Barolong-Bangwaketse relations will be dealt with later: it was nevertheless true that in many respects the Council bearing the name, initially, of Ngwaketse District Council, meeting usually in Kanye, the clan seat of the Bangwaketse, in a chamber adorned with a carved wooden crocodile, the emblem of the Bangwaketse,² paid little symbolic attention to the minority clan. The notepaper was an overprinted version of the Ngwaketse Tribal Administration's letterhead, many of the officials of the new District Council were from the old Kanye Tribal Administration, and - most significant of all - the ministerial proclamation setting up the District Council named as Chairman Chief Bathoen II, CBE,³ the veteran Chief of the Bangwaketse.

Chief Bathoen is something of a legend in his own life-time, and his nickname, "B 2", is a household word. One cannot do better than quote from a 1969 election poster:

Chief for forty-one years. Chairman African Council for seventeen years. Has served on the following bodies: Moeng

1 Speech by the Hon. T. Tsheko, Minister of Local Government, at the inaugural Meeting of the Ngwaketse District Council. SDC Minutes, 11-12 JUL 66.

2 Also, incidentally, of the Bakwena: "kwena" means "crocodile".

3 Legal Notice No. 44 of 1966, Government Gazette, 29 APR 66.

Governing Council; Advisory Board on African Education; Setswana Orthography Committee; Gaitskell Commission; Legislative and Executive Council; University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland; Director Botswana Meat Commission; Military Pensions Board; Chairman, Botswana Museum; and many more.¹

Equally impressive is the number of entries under his name in Schapera's classic works - 62 in his Tribal Innovators: Tswana Chiefs and Social Change 1795-1960² alone.

Bathoefi has led the Bangwaketse strongly ever since his inauguration in 1928, and has not shrunk from challenging the authorities, the most celebrated case being the challenge the young Chief presented, together with the late Chief Tshekedi Khama of the Bangwato, to the Native Administration Proclamation of 1934 and the Native Tribunals Proclamation of 1934.³ Although they lost their case (in 1936), the effect of challenge was reflected in subsequent changes in the law relating to local administration.⁴ A more modern - and hence for the Government more ominous - instance was the celebrated motion of no confidence in the House of Chiefs, moved at its second meeting (16 NOV 65) by Chief Bathoefi,

That the House of Chiefs . . . do hereby pass a vote of no confidence in the existence and functions of this House and therefore requests: (a) the dissolution of the House of Chiefs in its present form; (b) that the House be reconstituted to have some six elected members of standing outside the chieftainship; (c) that a Parliament for Bechuanaland be constituted with two Houses, namely a House of Chiefs and a House of Assembly.⁵

1 Poster reproduced in Appendix H.

2 See also R. P. Stevens, Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Botswana (1975), p. 23.

3 A. Sillery, Botswana: a short Political History (1976), pp. 134-5.

4 In 1943: ibid., p. 145

5 Cited in J. H. Proctor, "The House of Chiefs and the Political Development of Botswana," Journal of Modern African Studies, VI, 1, (1968).

Yet Bathoefi's position was ambivalent: he had earlier accepted the constitutional proposals (with whatever mental reservations). Either he subsequently changed his mind, or perhaps had judged it politic not to join the pan-Africanist Bechuanaland People's Party in outright opposition to the proposals at that stage.

A significant question in the sphere of local government was whether the Chief would throw his weight again into the "anti" scales, despite his earlier membership of the Local Government Committee¹ of 1964 whose recommendations formed the basis for the Local Government Law of 1965, which established the new system. The nearest the committee came to a minority report was in the following statement:

Fear was expressed by some members during meetings of the Committee that the proposed arrangements would relegate the Chiefs to the background and make them nothing more than figureheads and agents of the district councils. This view was not however shared by the majority of Committee members who discussed and approved a number of arrangements which would ensure than an active and conscientious Chief would be able to play a progressive and decisive part in a modern system of local government.²

If, then, there was to be a test case for the new system of rural local government, the Southern District looked like providing it. It is possible, indeed not uncommon, to view the introduction of the new system as providing a battleground for the forces of conservatism or traditionalism on the one hand and progress or modernisation on the other. This view however is open to the criticism that it confuses ends and means, and in particular if by modernisation and progress is meant some idea of mobilization and widespread participation it is possible to argue that the leadership of the aristocracy through familiar institutions could do more to transform the lives of the rural

1 Report of Local Government Committee, op. cit.

2 Ibid., para. 18 (emphasis added).

populace than the mere institution of direct elections to District Councils. That certainly represents the views of Bathoefi, who is described, let it be remarked parenthetically, by the late Dr. Sillery as "an able and progressive chief."¹

An alternative representation of the clash which was foreseen as occurring, par excellence in the Southern District, would be in more directly political terms: the institution of Chieftainship versus the State (or perhaps the BDP) on the other. This portrayal of the Southern District as an arena for a power struggle (in which policy issues are merely the grounds for argument between rival forces) would account for the considerable degree of interest shown by the Central Government in the affairs of the District: during the first few months of its existence the Council had a succession of visits from VIPs, both ministers and civil servants. Furthermore three of the five parliamentary² seats in the South were held by cabinet ministers. Of these the most significant is Dr Quett K. J. Masire, Vice-President of the Republic since its inauguration, and Minister of Finance & Development Planning, the "super ministry". Masire is credited with the classic remark, during the 1965 election campaign, "The Chiefs can tell their people how to vote but they cannot go into the polling booth with them." Between Masire, a commoner, and his Chief there was little love lost.

The paradox about the Southern District was the fact that politically it appeared to be a rock-solid Democratic Party stronghold. In the 1965 General Election 95% of the votes in Gangwaketse went to the BDP and even in the mixed urban/rural constituency of Lobatse/

1 A. Sillery, The Bechuanaland Protectorate (1952), p. 143

2 Technically, four-and-a-half, since one constituency, Lobatse/Barolong was only partly in the Southern District; Lobatse has its own Town Council.

Barolong the Domkrag share was over 80%. In the 1966 Local Government Elections the results were a clean sweep for the BDP; in the six Polling Districts¹ in which the party was opposed it polled 85% of the votes cast. These figures, however, as was to be seen later, concealed an underlying potential conflict. Bathoef^x traced the writing on the wall when, during his Chairman's address to the inaugural meeting of the Council, he

. . . registered a grievance against the manner in which the last Local Government elections were conducted. There was in reality no election but Political Party appointments. It would be wrong for anybody to say that the view of the Banwaketse are fully represented.²

For the Government and the Democratic Party, then, the Southern District Council was a challenge: if Bathoef^x could be contained within its structure, there was a strong likelihood that chieftainship would have been transformed; if however "tribalism" or traditionalism - however defined - prevailed amongst the Bangwaketse, there was no knowing which other Paramount Chiefs might not also mount a challenge to the new state, with the Kgatleng, North West and Kweneng Districts the most likely candidates but with an ultimate question mark over the massive Central District.

In the following sections, first the internal workings of the Southern District Council are examined, then its relationships with various external bodies, and finally the Southern District as a political arena.

1 All in Gangwaketse

2 SDC Minutes, 11-12 JUL 66

INTERNAL WORKINGS

Procedure

Procedure may be generally regarded as a boring subject and one which many Councillors never fully mastered,¹ yet its strict application has the function of protecting minorities and/or opponents of the Chair. Haphazard procedure, while causing Ministry officials and District Commissioners to draft lengthy improving tracts and acid marginal comments, has a rather random effect on decision-making, but tending towards consensus as a mode of decision-making. What is clear from studying Council minutes is the way in which the selective application of correct procedure as contained in the Standing Orders² favours the views of the Chair, the only challenge often coming from the Secretary, and that infrequently. When the Chairman is also a Chief, the tendency to follow traditional kgotla practice - in accordance with which everyone has his say and the Chief announces a conclusion (not necessarily a decision) - is predictable. Both Chief Bathoen and later Mr B. R. Chibana, MP, on occasion used their position as Chairman to shelve motions they deemed unwise, without any vote.³

Another important matter is the reference of motions to relevant committees. Standing Orders provide for this to be done automatically,

1 For an account of some of the difficulties encountered in practice see UBLS, Division of Extra-Mural Services, Report on Second Seminar for Councillors from Francistown Town Council and North East District Council, 23-24 MAR 74, App. D.

2 Of a standardised kind, and based on the Ministry of Local Government & Lands, Handbook for Chairmen, Secretaries and Members of District (and Town) Councils (several versions). (Generally known as the Councillors' Handbook.)

3 SDC Minutes, 2 AUG 66 and 23 MAY 72

and yet the practice is for many motions to be debated in full Council; if passed they are then referred to committees for implementation.¹ The decision on which motions to debate and which to refer is left to the Council to decide and frequently the Chairman's suggestion is accepted as if it were a ruling. However irregular this procedure may be, it does make the task of the researcher easier, as does the practice whereby the mover of a motion in full Council has the right to attend the committee meeting which subsequently discusses it.² Thus committees are not necessarily the key decision-makers: controversial matters are very often the subject of debate in full Council - which is perhaps just as well given the party composition of committees in Session II. Against this, committee decisions are rarely challenged to the extent of rejection or reference back.³ Minor amendments, which are slightly more common, will be mentioned later when dealing with the Council's planning or resource-allocating role and procedure.

One reason adduced for the poor understanding of procedure is the problem of language and the fact that Standing Orders are - if available at all - in some Councils provided only in English, a language which for many Councillors is difficult enough in general without their being expected to be familiar with technical terms of procedure. At least the Southern District Council - under the leadership of Chief Bathoen, - did make a greater effort than most to translate minutes and Standing Orders into Setswana.⁴

1 E.g. SDC Minutes, 24-25 FEB 71

2 See, for instance, SDC Report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, MAR-MAY 72.

3 A rare example of the latter occurred on the Traditional Beer (Retail Sales) Model Bye-Laws. SDC Minutes, 1-4 SEP 70.

4 SDC Minutes, 11-12 JUL 66, 13 SEP 66, 1-5 DEC 66; and Minutes of the General Purposes and Development Committee, 21 FEB 67.

It is difficult to overestimate the problems caused by the uneven application of the bilingual policy, but what it amounts to is that those Councillors who cannot read both English and Setswana are at a great disadvantage vis-à-vis better educated Councillors and, even more so, officials, since English is the official language for documents. A clear example of the problem was the warning by the Council Chairman, before Councillors proceeded to an election for the Trade Licensing Committee, that if possible members elected should be bilingual.¹ So, while all debates are in Setswana alone (which in turn causes difficulties for expatriate staff, including some of the District Administration), the facts on which many decisions are based are in English. Chief Bathoefi was one of the few leaders to attempt to grapple with this whole question, one which extends far beyond the realm of local government.

Officials

It is widely believed that District Councils are dominated by their officials and in particular the Council Secretary as chief executive officer. What is not so apparent is whether it is the post or the individual that wields such influence; and what the restraints are upon the Secretary. In the case of the Southern District the answer is that the post of Secretary is capable of being used by an able individual as a position of considerable influence. The first Secretary, publicly criticised by Councillors for inefficiency,² was not very effective; moreover he was constrained by the powerful

1 SDC Minutes, 25-27 SEP 67

2 SDC Minutes, 25-27 SEP 67 and 24-25 MAR 69. The official concerned was part of the legacy of the Bangwaketse Tribal Administration.

figure of Chief Bathoefi as Chairman.¹ His energetic successor, on the other hand, was so influential that he was criticised by an Opposition Councillor for "submitting his own motions"; and on occasion "replied" to motions so that they were in effect dropped.² A Peace Corps Adviser was also recorded as the successful originator of proposals to a committee.³ More seriously a decision taken by the Council in 1969 on the policy of engaging casual labour was revealed, five years later, to have been ignored by the administration.⁴ More will be said about the role of officials later, in connexion with planning. What is clear is that the influence of the Council Secretary, though considerable, was regarded with some jealousy by Councillors of both political parties.

Councillors' remuneration

While Council secretaries are widely believed to be the effective bosses of Council, it is almost as common to hear that Councillors' main interest is in improving their own remuneration (allowances) and facilities. Obviously the more frequently (committee) meetings are held the more members of the committee earn by way of allowances, and it was specifically suggested by the Council staff in a marginal comment on a report that meetings were "convened oftener than

1 The question of whether the Chairman was the chief executive officer was the subject of correspondence between Chief Bathoefi and the District Commissioner (13 JUL 66 and 18 JUL 66). The original proposal of the Local Government Committee (on which Bathoefi served) had been that "In districts where the Chief is Chairman of the council, he should also be the council's senior executive officer; in other words, he should be responsible for the implementation of council's decisions. In other districts this duty would normally be performed by the Clerk of the Council." Report of Local Government Committee, op. cit., p. 4.

2 SDC Minutes, 30 NOV 71 and 22 MAY 73

3 General Purposes Committee Report, JUL-SEP 69.

4 SDC Minutes, 24-25 MAR 69 and 11 JUN 74

necessary(?)." ¹ Moreover even in times of financial crisis and severe cuts in spending the Council made sure there was enough money to pay Councillors their allowances. ² Against this it was noticeable that repeated attempts to have official transport provided for Councillors - which would have particularly benefited the more remote ones - were defeated, ³ and a motion asking for tax exemption for allowances was deferred. ⁴ The general picture then is of restraint in requests for improvements in Councillors' terms of service.

Issues

Water At the risk of emphasising the obvious, water is a key resource in a country like Botswana which suffers not only from relatively low rainfall but from the unreliability of rain. The Southern District while better watered than many districts suffers from the problem that there is normally no natural surface water. In the absence of artificial storage ⁵ it is a question of tapping natural underground storage in the form of river beds ("sand extraction"), well or springs - all three methods used traditionally - or the modern method of sinking boreholes. Insofar as the Council is able to provide and control water supplies (Central Government's involvement will be discussed later), Councillors' interests in

1 SDC Minutes, 9-10 DEC 69, App. A.

2 SDC Minutes, 22-23 FEB 71

3 Ibid., 1-5 DEC 66; 17-18 SEP 68; 24-25 JUN 69. But the Education Committee did agree to the proposal "if necessary" on 28 JUL 66.

4 SDC Minutes, 17-18 SEP 74

5 An invaluable discussion of problems associated with introducing low-cost artificial storage is contained in J. Flood, Report on Development Projects supported by Botswana Christian Council, (1974), pp. 268-280 and passim.

water divides into two spheres. The first is the provision of domestic water supplies to villages and schools, and was the subject of a very large number of questions and motions, from Councillors of both parties. The second concerns policy on borehole allocation and management and brings in the question of land allocation and cattle. The principle of communal ownership of land and water is of great importance in the "clan tenure" or "tribal land" areas (it does not apply to freehold farms, owned mainly by Europeans, along the southern border of the Republic and of the District). But this principle is in practice affected by the policy of stipulating a minimum distance between boreholes, which in effect gives exclusive, if unfenced, control of an area of at least five miles in diameter to the registered owner/user of a borehole. The officially favoured solution is to allow syndicates of (cattle) farmers to use boreholes rather than individuals. Thus an application for private ownership of a borehole was rejected on the grounds that only syndicates may own boreholes, and a motion (by a BNF Councillor) that dams¹ should be sold to members of the Bangwaketse clan was withdrawn. On the other hand a single individual was permitted to take over a borehole "and to form a syndicate" - which seems to recognise the reality that many "syndicates" which officially control a borehole exist on paper only and are really one farmer. In another case an application by one man "to syndicate a borehole" was not rejected outright, the committee instead resolving to inspect the borehole.²

1 Constructed by the Government's Dam Building Unit.

2 F&GP, Report, MAR-MAY 72; F&GP Minutes, 6 MAR 73; General Purposes & Development Committee Minutes, 3 NOV 71; F&GP Minutes 9 JAN 73

While officially the rules on borehole syndication were clear,¹ in practice the Southern District Council wavered in its application of the policy. Thus in 1968 it was agreed that Council boreholes which had been abandoned be hired out to applicants, but a year later it was decided that pre-1965 boreholes could be sold to individuals or syndicates. In 1970 it was resolved (on a BNF motion) to take over again the boreholes in the Kgalagadi (Kalahari) as syndicates had been a failure. The most serious indication that the syndicate system was not working properly came with an allegation that syndicates were refusing water to local people and it was resolved that the Secretary should explain to all syndicates their local duty to the local community, "even if they were not registered members of a syndicate"² It was perhaps fitting that the Syndicate Secretary resigned in 1974 without submitting a final report. The water policy, therefore, was marked by contradiction, but not based on any consistent policy division between the two parties.

Cattle marketing As with water, general questions about cattle came up fairly often from Councillors, particularly Barolong representatives. But the biggest issue concerning cattle was the question of marketing. A Ngwaketse Cattle Marketing Scheme had been successfully set up under the leadership of Chief Bathoen in the days before District Councils existed and was one of his favourite projects, with a reasonable annual turnover and an accumulating reserve fund.³ From about 1962, moreover, according to one Morolong Councillor, it had been decided to discontinue auction sales in favour of a co-operative

1 GP&D Minutes, 3 NOV 71; Finance & Staff Committee Report, OCT-NOV 71; F&GP Report, MAR-MAY 73.

2 SDC Minutes, 12-14 MAR 68; General Purposes Committee Report, JUL-SEP 69; SDC Minutes, 23-25 JUN 70; F&GP Minutes, 6 MAR 73.

3 Report of General Purposes Committee, DEC 66

sales syndicate. Accordingly an application by one Mr Grobler for permission to set up auction sales in three places in the district (with a 2% commission to the Council), which came up for discussion in 1967, was left in abeyance. The lengthy debate on the matter throws some light on the decision-making process in committee. Arguing in favour of the application were the District Commissioner, the Council Secretary and only one member of the committee, while the committee Chairman and all but one other Councillor were against; what is remarkable is not the outcome but the way in which two officials, not members of the joint committee which was debating the matter, with the support of only one Councillor, were able to drag out the discussion at such length.¹

Two years later the Ngwaketse Cattle Marketing Scheme was closed down by the decision of a committee of Council - and not even challenged at the next full meeting of the Council. Almost certainly many Councillors failed to realise what the report of the committee entailed as they approved it. Four years later the accumulated surplus - originally intended to be paid out as loans - was transferred to Council development funds.² The lesson of this episode was the way in which decisions, on a matter which interested many Councillors, went through in a way which a debate in full Council might well have altered.

Education Education questions certainly occupied a fair amount of the attention of Councillors, but not nearly as much as the share of Council budgets devoted to education. The main pressures were for

1 Minutes of [Joint Meeting of] Finance & Development and General Purposes Committees, 21 FEB 67.

2 F&GP Report, MAR-MAY 73; F&GP Minutes, 23 MAR 73.

schools in villages and settlements without them, and for the expansion and upgrading of existing schools. The scope of the problem was admirably summarised by the Education Secretary in his regular reports,¹ documenting deficiencies of both quantity and quality in buildings, staff and equipment. What was peculiar to the Southern District however was the high proportion of private schools (some registered, some not) compared with the rest of the country,² and one of the problems of the Council was how to deal with them - or, more accurately, how to persuade the Central Government to allow for their recognition and gradual incorporation within the public school system. As the Education Committee put it in 1968:

numerous unregistered schools had been established as a result of public demand and because there was no local provision by the Council. . . . it would be wise for central government to be tolerant of these bush schools and not to lay any stringent regulation in respect of them.³

By 1973 the Council was preparing to take over three registered private schools and in 1974 agreed to supply all private schools with furniture and include the recognised ones in the School Feeding Programme.⁴ This example shows the success of a sustained policy in exerting pressure on the Government to allow a departure from strict rules. Again no clear party differences appear on this question.

Commerce The activities of the Trade Licensing Committee (which by law includes non-Councillors) followed a fairly standard pattern: that is to say, most application for licences were approved provided

1 E.g. appendices to SDC Minutes of 1-5 DEC 66 and 30 NOV 71

2 The problem of private schools was closely linked with the pattern of migration to the agricultural areas. Why this problem should have been more acute in the Southern District is obscure.

3 SDC Minutes, 19-20 DEC 68

4 Education Committee Minutes, 22 JAN 73, 13 FEB 73, 27 AUG 74.

that the formalities were complied with (advertisement, appearance before the committee etc.), with the important exception that licences for hawking were frequently refused on the grounds that to grant such licences would damage established traders and result in "over-trading;" on one occasion those grounds were adduced for refusing an application for a Small General Trading licence.¹ In this regard the committee followed much the same policy as many other Councils - a policy criticised later at a national conference of District Development Committee representatives.² Certainly a few Councillors and ex-Councillors had their applications for trading licences granted; but this in itself is hardly surprising. More interestingly, the policy as regards hawking seems to have been reversed to one of encouragement of competition in 1974;³ by this time there was BNF representation on this committee but it is impossible to say whether this had any bearing on the change of policy. At any rate the kind of party division over this topic discernible in the North East District was not in evidence in the Southern District.

Land allocation In the earlier part of the period studied, land allocation was still a matter for the Chief; reference to this aspect of the question is made below in dealing with the "Bathoefi issue". Once Land Boards were set up (separately for Gangwaketse and Borolong)⁴ the Council's main interest lay in getting the Land Boards to submit their land allocation policies to the Council for approval - thus asserting the position that the Boards came under Council, with the effect that District Council power was extended.

1 Ngwaketse Trade Licensing Committee Report, JUL 69

2 1st National Conference of DDCs, Gaborone, 5 DEC 72

3 TLC Report, JUN-AUG 74

4 On Barolong agriculture see B. G. Lever, Agricultural Extension in Botswana (1970), Ch. 2 and passim.

The first such demand was made by Council on a motion by BDP ex-MP Councillor Sebotho but had to be repeated, two years later.¹ The outcome was an important statement of policy, arrived at in a joint meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee with the Ngwaketse and Rolong Land Boards. The meeting laid down in particular a maximum acreage (of 40 acres for a subsistence farmer and 50 for a commercial farmer), and a normal limit of one borehole per (individual) farmer (with the possibility of one additional one "under certain conditions"); the policy of five miles between boreholes was reaffirmed.² This policy, which was to apply to future applications, can be viewed as fairly egalitarian for new applicants even if it left existing allocations unaffected. It is significant too, firstly, that no attempt was made to challenge particular allocations and, secondly, that once again no obvious party differences emerged on this vital issue.

Corruption

The general question of corruption is dealt with elsewhere. In the Southern District Council there was little evidence of any and little recorded discussion of it. An exception was allegations of corrupt allocation of land by Chiefs which although not denied were not proven.³ Bearing in mind Vengroff's allegations of corruption by Councillors in the award of bursaries in the neighbouring Kweneng District,⁴ it is perhaps worth listing the membership of the Bursaries Sub-Committee of the Southern District Council. It comprised five Councillors; two Council officials; the District

1 SDC Minutes, 25-26 MAY 71 and 22 MAY 73

2 F&GP Report, MAR-JUN 72

3 SDC Minutes, 16-18 SEP 69

4 R. Vengroff op. cit., pp. 182-183

Commissioner; and one layman.¹ Thus for awards to be made corruptly would have required the connivance of the four non-Councillors on the committee - a possibility which in the Botswana context appears remote, and was emphatically refuted by all interviewees.

Councillors' Interests

A significant minority of Councillors were active in commerce, approximately one quarter of the BDP Councillors holding trading licences, which was true of only one BNF Councillor. Looking for the possibility of corruption or abuse of position one then asks whether Councillors have been awarding trading licences to themselves or to fellow Councillors in any improper way. The evidence is that they have not been guilty of any impropriety but rather that the BDP have recruited shopkeepers, or those that way inclined, in significant numbers as candidates: the party division here is reminiscent in attenuated form of the position in the North-East District. That said, it must be noted that two tendencies noted earlier have operated in favour of both applicants for trading licences and established commercial interests, viz. the practice of granting trading licences, provided the formalities have been complied with, but of refusing hawkers' licences (certainly in the earlier part of the period studied)² where these would compete with existing stores.

Another factor of major importance is that the traditional method of accumulating wealth is to acquire and breed cattle; thus shopkeeping is essentially an alternative means of amassing wealth (to be invested in cattle) in this District as in most parts of Botswana, rather than the main avenue to prosperity. Although it

1 SDC Minutes, 24-25 MAR 69

2 See p. 113 above

has proved impossible to ascertain the extent of cattle holdings by Councillors in the District as a whole, some figures are given elsewhere.¹

One example of attempted abuse of position which can be noted however if anything proves the opposite: when in the First Session two Councillors attempted to secure supplies of water to points near their houses, they were publicly criticised for their behaviour, at a meeting of the full Council.²

PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Until the advent of District Development Committees in 1971 the structure of planning was rather ill-defined. To be sure, there was in existence from mid-1967 a Planning Committee which might well have served as an alternative model³ for the DDC which was eventually set up. The Planning Committee consisted of the Chairmen of standing committees, the Chairman and Secretary of the Council, and the District Commissioner.⁴ But this Committee never developed into a key institution and planning was left in effect to the General Purposes & Development Committee (with a more minor role played by the Finance Committee). The two committees were later combined into the Finance & General Purposes Committee.⁵ The ad hoc nature of the formal structure is further illustrated by the designation of a Five Year Planning Committee to deal with the District input to the National

1 In Appendices D and G

2 SDC Minutes, 25-27 SEP 67

3 Such a suggestion was in fact made in 1965 at the national level long before the Tordoff Commission was established. P. G. L. Wass, "Community Development in Botswana" (1972), pp. 284-286.

4 SDC Minutes, 19 JUN 67

5 Ibid., 30 NOV 71

Development Plan, and by the use of sub-committees, such as one established to consider water reticulation to Moshupa; the latter consisted of the District Commissioner, the Council Secretary, one Councillor and two members of the Village Development Committee.¹ The attention paid by Councillors to resource allocation however bore no relation to the formal structure of Council committees.

Examples abound of the rubber stamping by Council of priorities proposed by officials and adopted by committees with no amendments and little discussion. These range from the draft Five Year Development Plan through the retrospective approval of overspent votes on self-help projects to the list of priorities in school building and equipment. The estimates likewise were regularly approved without amendment or even challenge.²

To this rule of passive acceptance of proposals a number of interesting exceptions can be noted. When Council members actively intervened in determining the allocation of resources and setting of priorities this came about for one of three main reasons: village initiative; backbench initiative; or committee revision of semi-official proposals or draft plans. Of the three categories, village initiatives came off worst. For instance, of several attempts to get village water supplies only one was agreed because it was "very urgent"; another village's application for a clinic was rejected on the grounds that its population was too small, while two other villages which applied for Council assistance in getting telephone lines were turned down.³ More common was the deferment of a decision until

1 SDC Minutes, 10-20 DEC 68

2 Ibid., 12-14 MAR 68; Finance Committee Minutes 22 FEB 67; SDC Minutes 24-25 MAR 69; ibid., 16-18 SEP 69; F&GP Report, JUN-SEP 74.

3 SDC Minutes 16-18 SEP 69; ibid., 22-23 FEB 72; GP Report, JUL-SEP 69

reports had been made; or the reference of the question to a Central Government agency. In the later phase when the district (and national) planning machinery was in operation the reason given for turning down local requests was more commonly that they were not in the Development Plan; in one case, a committee even reversed a locally initiated development as being inconsistent with the printed plan.¹

The active involvement of Councillors in resource allocation had only a marginal effect on the chance of a particular request or suggestion. Thus one Councillor succeeded in having a particular village included in the road signs programme, but other motions sponsored by Councillors on roads and clinics were withdrawn or deferred on the grounds that they were not in the list of planned development projects.² An angry (BDP) Councillor who moved successfully that projects be allocated geographically in accordance with revenue raised locally, and that projects be implemented in the order in which they were approved by the Council, saw both his motions defeated.³ The most successful moves to alter draft plans were made by committees acting collectively, for instance by adding to the list of places at which teachers' quarters were to be built. In another case a suggestion by an official to use savings on one item to buy materials for a particular village met with strong opposition from some Councillors and the eventual decision was to share the sum between two villages (one of them represented by a member of the committee) on the grounds that the second village

1 Staff and Finance Committee Minutes, 5 APR 68; F&GP Minutes, 23 MAR 73; SDC Minutes 19-20 DEC 68; Education Committee Minutes, 24-25 AUG 71; F&GP Minutes 9 JAN 73.

2 SDC Minutes 16 OCT 69 and 1-4 SEP 70; F&GP Minutes, 23 MAY 72

3 SDC Minutes, 22-23 FEB 72

deserved to be rewarded for its zeal in self-help.¹

The influence of Chairmen and officials is openly revealed in a number of cases. It was the Chairman of the appropriate committee who successfully proposed the transfer of the balance from the Ngwaketse Cattle Marketing Scheme to the Development Fund. In two other cases the Council Secretary took the initiative in discussion of the Development Plan, in one example rejecting a motion from BNF Councillors on boreholes.² Later in the period the District Officer (Development), the Secretary of the District Development Committee, was the initiator; one interesting result of one of his initiatives was the committee decision to leave the selection of priority projects, to be financed out of R18,000 unallocated funds, to the Council staff. In another case the Education Secretary's recommendation to hire project leaders for voluntary projects - an important point of principle - was accepted nem. con..³

In another major area planning was determined by external factors, particularly the Central Government but also including foreign aid donors. Thus committees accepted without demur suggestions on how the Food-for-Work programme was to be run, on the transfer of (U.S. Embassy) funds from laggard villages to those willing to guarantee speedy completion of projects; on financing the completion of what were supposed to be self-help projects, and the entire Accelerated

1 SDC Minutes of Education Committee, 22 JAN 73, 13 FEB 73, 27 AUG 74

2 Minutes of Finance & Development and General Purposes Committees, 21 FEB 67; SDC Minutes, 23 MAY 72; F&GP Minutes, 6 MAR 73

3 F&GP Report, MAR-MAY 73; Project Memorandum Z1 [1972]; Education Committee Minutes, 18 MAY 71

Rural Development Project list.¹ Most significantly of all the full Council accepted without discussion the downwards revision of the estimates, necessitated by Ministry directive, worked out by the staff, (but approved in toto "only after thorough scrutiny" by the committee responsible). This financial crisis of 1971 led to the stopping of rations for destitutes (by committee decision) and the saving of some of the money voted for water supplies (apparently by the staff).² Yet there was only oblique criticism of the Government³ for necessitating the pruning of estimates by its decision to raise the salaries of teachers employed by the District Councils.⁴

Some of the decisions taken on priorities make interesting reading. Early on in the Council's history there was a neat example of the acceptance of bureaucratic priorities: over a two-day period it was agreed that the proposed new committee structure (involving an increase in the number of committees) was too expensive, but at the same time to proceed with the plan for new offices.⁵ Another decision around the same time, viz. to vire a sum of money for school buildings to complete Ipelegeng projects, revealed not a concern with self-help so much as the desire to cover misunderstandings and errors in budgeting.⁶ Evidence of the expendability of development was the decision taken in 1971 to suspend all development projects; a decision

1 GP Report, APR-JUN 69; Education Committee Minutes, 30 APR-1 MAY 73; F&GP Report, MAR-JUN 74.

2 SDC Minutes, 30 NOV 71; F&S Report, OCT-NOV 71; SDC Minutes 30 NOV 71.

3 In fact a unilateral decision by the Ministry of Education.

4 F&S Report, OCT-NOV 71.

5 GP&D Minutes, 21 FEB 67; Finance Committee Minutes, 22 FEB 67.

6 SDC Minutes 1-5 DEC 66 (Report of General Purposes and Finance Committees).

which, tucked away as it was in a committee report which no-one challenged in full Council, obviously surprised at least one Councillor months later.¹ Another and rather glaring example of the same kind of priority was the decision to maintain the suspension of the Destitutes Fund "until the financial position improves" while seeking a supplementary estimate to cover (retrospectively) Councillors' allowances.² Another point of interest was the explicit priority accorded to the District capital, Kanye, in water supply, school facilities, and health services.³ These decisions bore no relationship to the number of committee members from Kanye wards.

EXTERNAL ASPECTS

The external relations of the District Council can be seen as connecting up in different directions and on different planes: downwards to the villages, inter alia through the Councillors; outwards to the traditional system of administration; and upwards to the central government (and indeed foreign donors).

Village development - "Ipelegeng"

The District Council's approach to its umbrella role vis-à-vis Village Development Committees and the range of "grassroots" activities commonly referred to collectively as Ipelegeng can best be characterised as benevolent but passive: undogmatically helpful rather than actively encouraging. The implicit assumption was that the initiative lay firmly with the Village Development Committees, whose activities therefore were normally welcomed, unless they conflicted with existing plans, e.g. if the building of a school or a clinic were seen as an

1 SDC Minutes, 9-10 SEP 71 and 22-23 FEB 72

2 Ibid., 22-23 FEB 72

3 Ibid., 16-18 SEP 69, 12-14 MAR 68; F&GP Report, JUN-SEP 74

attempt to commit the Council to recurrent expenditure for which it had not planned. The concept of the "matching fund" epitomises the Council's approach, although on occasion they were sceptical enough of a VDC's intentions or capacity to insist on a prior deposit of money before the Council's balance would be released! But further action which was beyond the scope of the VDC to provide, e.g. the grading of roads constructed by self-help, sometimes waited for long enough. The benevolent attitude towards the VDCs meant for instance that when a VDC applied for authorisation to pay a builder - contrary to the original intention of "boipelego"(self-help) - this was approved without a murmur. Equally the lengthy delays in completing Ipelegeng projects did not normally concern Council greatly: it was only when delays threatened the release of further funds that Council took action.¹

The attitude towards the actual institution of the Village Development Committee was generally positive, the same being true for Parent-Teacher Associations/School Committees, which in many instances were engaged in activities similar to those of VDCs. The most extreme example of such support was a BDP Councillor's motion, adopted by the Council in an atmosphere of relatively high political feeling just after the 1969 election, seeking to make participation in Ipelegeng compulsory (through bye-laws).² More typical were decisions to consult the VDC on a private application for a borehole, and (on a BNF Councillor's motion) to refer the question of the expulsion of school children for not paying fees to the local school committees.³

1 F&GP Minutes, 23 MAR 73 and 5 JUN 73; F&GP Report, MAR-MAY 72; SDC Minutes 5-7 SEP 72; F&GP Report on SDC Development Projects, JUN 74

2 SDC Minutes, 9-10 DEC 69. This was aimed against the BNF, who were regularly accused by the BDP of sabotaging self-help.

3 F&GP Minutes, 9 JAN 73; Education Committee Minutes, 9 MAY 72

The lack of a comprehensive policy on Ipelegeng was made particularly obvious, ironically, in a lengthy address by the Community Development, Kanye, to Council in 1970. In his speech he felt obliged to distinguish between development projects, self-help, Food-for-Work and Famine Relief - a distinction far from clear in the minds of many Councillors, let alone the general public. He went on to explain what VDCs were for, and to berate Councillors for retarding progress by their political differences, which he stated was not the purpose for which they were elected. Finally the official expounded the role of the Community Development Department as co-ordinator of the work of the District Council, Councillors, the traditional administration and VDCs; the Community Development Assistants he portrayed as the key figures in this undertaking. As if to emphasise bureaucratic supremacy a tour of the District was then announced, with a view to determining priorities for the Famine Relief Programme, by a party consisting of the Community Development Officer, the District Commissioner, the Agricultural Officer, the Veterinary Officer and the Council Secretary.¹ Five months later two Councillors were elected to serve on the Famine Relief Committee. This Famine Relief programme cut across earlier efforts to allay discontent in the villages at the lack of consultation by the Planning Committee of Council, embodied in a decision to embark on an extensive process of encouraging the submission by VDCs of plans in 1970 for 1971 projects, followed by a tour of the villages by representatives of the District Council and the District Administration.²

1 SDC Minutes, 1-4 SEP 70

2 Ibid., 24-26 FEB 71 and 14 OCT 69

It is little wonder that many Councillors were bemused by the whole institutional set-up regarding Ipelegeng to the extent that, as late as 1974, some Councillors could complain that they had been told that they were not members of VDCs in their wards, only then to be informed that they were ex officio members.¹ Equally remarkable, in view of the supposedly party-political nature of Ipelegeng, is the lack of any clear party line on the subject in the District Council.

The role of Councillors

The official view of the Councillor's role is one familiar to anyone acquainted with the representative model of local government, and was much stressed at the inception of the modern system of local government in Botswana. The classic statement is found in the Councillors' Handbook, which defines inter alia the Councillor's role as representative of his ward and his function as a channel of communication equally in the other direction, reporting back to his electors.² The former role was performed with varying degrees of energy by most Councillors, although one or two made visible and determined efforts only close to elections;³ the latter was rarely mentioned.

Much more vital to the average Councillor than the official version of his role was his relations with the dikgosana (Headmen) who were the long-established leaders of the people, and who exercised their non-judicial power through the same kind of two-way communication described above, via the vital institution of the village kgotla,⁴ which the Headman alone could summon.

1 SDC Minutes, 19-21 FEB 74

2 Councillors' Handbook, paras. 47 and 49 (5)

3 E.g. three motions moved under "Any other business" at the last meeting before the elections by a hitherto very silent Councillor, SDC Minutes 17-18 SEP 74.

4 Discussed in Chapter 6

It is therefore no surprise to find in the Southern District, as elsewhere in the Republic, regular complaints by Councillors of non-co-operation from Headmen or Chief's Representatives, or, more euphemistically, of "confusion" between Headmen and Councillors with regard to their respective roles.¹ Several overt attempts were made by Councillors to alter the institutional arrangements and powers traditionally pertaining to dikgosana in their favour. For instance one Councillor proposed an alteration to the draft matimela bye-laws so that the finders of stray cattle should report to the Councillor before reporting to the Headman. Another Councillor attempted - but was ruled out of order - to have two posts of Headman abolished, while another motion called unsuccessfully for Councillors to deputise for Headmen in their absence. In a more conciliatory spirit, it was agreed that Councillors and dikgosana should act jointly to ensure that the relief programme was being carried out.²

It is noticeable however that most of the complaints and moves against Headmen were made during the First Session, when the system was new. As time went on the practice grew of encouraging Councillors to move away from being rather passive public figures concerned with status towards a more specific organisational function. One such job was the organisation of local Independence Day celebrations "through local committees." As annual feasts these celebrations had a considerable symbolic significance, more than the actual sums of money involved might indicate. Somewhat belatedly - in 1972 - a Council committee resolved that Councillors should "become prominent

1 SDC Minutes, 1-5 DEC 66, 25-27 SEP 67, 5-7 SEP 72

2 GP&D Minutes, 21 FEB 67; SDC Minutes, 26 JUN 68, 17-18 SEP 68, 16-18 SEP 69

3 Ibid., 18-19 NOV 69, 25-26 MAY 71; Education Committee Minutes, 8 FEB 72, 9 MAY 72

members of organisations which are dealing with developments such as PTA and VDC" and went on to ask specific Councillors to organise public meetings (involving VDCs and PTAs as appropriate) together with the Chief (of the Bangwaketse or Barolong as the case might be) in each instance to explain the Council's views on particular school development proposals to the villages.¹

This procedure recognised the position of the (Paramount) Chiefs, who were in any case Council members, but suggested that the local Councillor act rather like the village Headman in convening a meeting - even if the reality was that the Headman would have to make the announcement; it was of course inconceivable that the Headman could refuse to convene a meeting to be addressed inter alia by his superior. It had the additional advantage, from the point of view of the majority party in the Council, of ensuring participation by Opposition Councillors in public explanations of Council decisions.

The Traditional Administration

Mention has just been made of Councillors' relations with the traditional administration at the village level; a later section deals with the "B II affair", i.e. the clash between Chief Bathoefi II and the authorities. Here it is the Council's relations with the traditional (or tribal) administration of the two clans within the Southern District, the Bangwaketse and the Barolong, which will be examined. The striking fact is that, despite the dispute with Chief Bathoen and the lesser rivalries at village level with dikgosana, by and large the Councillors accepted the traditional administration as a fact of Batswana life and indeed a useful tool of administration.

¹ SDC Minutes, 18-19 NOV 69, 25-26 MAY 71; Education Committee Minutes, 8 FEB 72, 9 MAY 72

For example, the District Commissioner's announcement that he (i.e. the District Administration) would henceforth be responsible for the registration of births and deaths, since it "had not worked" under the Tribal Administration, was tempered by the significant emendation that in smaller villages registration could be done at Sub-Tribal Offices.¹

Council acknowledged, moreover, the important role of the Local Police (formerly known as Tribal Police) in enforcing bye-laws, and repeated demands were made of the Government for more Local Police to be provided. Similarly when volunteers were required to collect matimela, the announcement was to be made by the Chief to the kgotla; the Chief likewise was asked to advise Chief's Representatives to apply the matimela by-laws strictly.²

The ceremonial side of the traditional system was likewise accepted. For instance an early motion calling for dikgafela (a kind of harvest thanksgiving or tribute) to be used for Ipelegeng projects was defeated and it was stated that dikgafela - like land, one might add - were the property of the clan, not of the Chief. Again, a request from the Barolong for cattle to be slaughtered at the installation of Chief Besele II was approved.³

Even more noteworthy was the passing of a resolution calling for the revival of the old system of revenue collection which, it was claimed, was more successful since it involved the Headmen, not salaried revenue collectors.⁴

1 SDC Minutes, 23 MAY 72

2 SDC Minutes, 22-23 FEB 72, 17-18 SEP 68, 24-26 FEB 71, 17-18 SEP 74, 12-14 MAR 68; F&GP Report, MAR-MAY 72

3 SDC Minutes, 31 JUL-2 AUG 67, 11 JUN 74, 9-10 DEC 69

4 Ibid., 31 JUL-2 AUG 67. This was more a criticism of the new system than a serious attempt to revert to the old one.

Against these examples however there were occasions when the system was challenged. A minor example was the decision to ask the Government to intervene to override the Bangwaketse Chief's ban on the use of ox-wagons on a certain hill in Kanye; a more significant instance was the attempt to institutionalise advice to the Chief (via a committee of Council) on land allocation, thus foreshadowing the subsequent establishment of Land Boards.¹

Relations with the Central Government

The political significance attached by the Government to the Southern District is reflected in the relatively large number of visits by VIPs - both ministers and senior civil servants - to address the Council. The themes stressed in their addresses included expositions of the "democratic pyramid" of institutions including District Councils; the necessity for Councillors to keep in close touch with their constituents (to avoid electoral defeat); the importance of co-operation between the Council and the traditional system of administration at all levels; the desirability for Councillors to acquaint themselves with Standing Orders; and the perennial question of improving on revenue collection.²

Other important matters raised were the transfer of mineral rights from the two clans in the district to the State and the major Accelerated Rural Development Programme, which was launched by the Government early in the election year of 1974 without prior consultation with the District Councils and which totally bypassed, or one might say disrupted, district plans. It is also noteworthy

1 GP Minutes, 3 NOV 71; SDC Minutes, 19 JUN 67

2 Ibid., 19-21 FEB 74, 11-12 JUL 66, 23 MAY 72, 19-21 FEB 74

that this District Council, like most others, received a Presidential visit shortly before the 1969 General Election.¹ In these official addresses the Council chamber was treated somewhat like the traditional kgotla as a forum for important speeches.

From the perspective of the District Council several issues were of central concern in its relations with the Government. The first of these was water. Despite its alleged status as "Government's top priority"² grave dissatisfaction was expressed by the Council on two counts: firstly the tardiness of the administration in dealing with urgent problems (reflected in two delegations sent by the Council),³ and secondly the exasperating problem of dealing with the Department of Water Affairs, which operated separately from the Department of Geological Surveys, which locate borehole sites. The Water Affairs Department was forced by the Minister responsible to make several concessions to Council pressure on the water supply for the district capital, Kanye.⁴

Another sensitive issue was the Kanye Youth Training Centre, which was a significant source of local employment but was run very inefficiently. The question was taken up vigorously by the District Development Committee but the Council also made a number of scathing remarks about the lack of action by the Director of Community Development and the absence of co-ordination between the Ministries of Local Government & Lands and Agriculture.⁵

1 Ibid., 19 JUN 67, 19-21 FEB 74, 14 OCT 69; See also BDN, 9 OCT 69.

2 SDC Minutes, 12 SEP 66

3 Ibid., 23-25 JUN 70; F&S Report, OCT-NOV 71. Such delegations were a rare event in Botswana.

4 SDC Minutes, 22-23 FEB 72, 16 MAR 71

5 F&GP Minutes, 6 FEB 73, 6 MAR 73, 13 MAR 73; see below, pp. 362-363.

In more general terms the Council expressed its concern at the way in which it was precipitated into financial crisis in the field of education - the major item of Council expenditure - by the Government's decisions to increase teachers' pay and to reduce school fees - the latter leading to the necessity for the employment of extra (unqualified) teachers.¹

THE BATHOEN AFFAIR

The protracted dispute between Chief Bathoefi II and the Southern District Council was more than an aspect of the Council's relations with the traditional system: it was arguably the central issue in Southern District politics. In other words the story of particularly the First Session of the Council is largely the story of the clash between B II on the one hand, and the "new men" of the Council, and the Central Government, on the other - with power moving steadily towards his opponents.

Bathoefi's position as Chairman

A pillar of the new system of local government was the desire to transform the aristocracy by involving, or enmeshing, the Paramount Chiefs in the District Councils as ex officio Chairmen. This process, sometimes described as "democratising" or "modernising" the Chieftainship, if successful would help to legitimise the new Councils by making the new Chairmen responsible for decisions collectively arrived at; hence the decision to make the boundaries of the old Tribal Administration coincide wherever possible with those of the new Districts.

Chief Bathoefi's inaugural speech as Chairman was thus of considerable interest. He chose the occasion to present a concise

1 F&GP Minutes, 9 JAN 73

conservative manifesto, stressing his misgivings at the unrepresentative nature of elections - "selection by one party"; his concern for the preservation of Setswana customs; a plea for the pace of development to be slowed down to avoid its getting out of hand; and his criticism of the almost exclusive use of English instead of Setswana as the language of official documents.¹ It is worth noting that the Government's response to the intransigent voice from the south was oblique to the point of being conciliatory.²

It was in fact left to the District Commissioner to pull the Chief up for his excessively strong leadership - or abuse of position - from the Chair. In the early meetings of the Council Bathoefi frequently used a "kgotla-type veto" by simply replying to a motion, declaring it impracticable, or saying that it could not be proceeded with as it concerned some other body. The ace up his sleeve was his control of the Bangwaketse kgotla; thus he would postpone an item until the clan had been consulted.³ Nevertheless this high-handed Chairmanship of the Council led swiftly to a confrontation with the District Commissioner, who wrote a letter to Chief Bathoefi and the Government criticising his handling of meetings. In a dramatic move the Chief stalked out of the third meeting in protest.⁴ With hindsight it is clear that the District Administration won that round, and that Chief Bathoefi was engaged in fighting a rearguard action from then on. It was merely symbolic of his eclipse that a motion in 1968 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Bathoefi's accession to the Chieftainship was defeated by 21 votes to 4. On the other

1 SDC Minutes, 11-12 JUL 66

2 Witness the speech by the Minister of Local Government & Lands six months later, and Chief Bathoefi's response. SDC Minutes, 21-24 FEB 67

3 Ibid., 2 AUG 66, 13 SEP 66

4 Ibid.

hand the Council - and the Government - approved a travelling allowance for Bathoefi - in his capacity as Council Chairman - of R300 per annum at about the same time.¹

The battle between B II and the Council was joined over a number of specific issues.

Beer

The prohibitionist tradition in Bechuanaland went back a long way into the history of the Protectorate and even beyond. Christian missionaries from the time of Livingstone had, where successful in converting Batswana Chiefs to Christianity, made temperance one of the planks of their suggestions for social reform. For the Christian Chiefs, prohibition (of strong liquor) had the additional attraction of, firstly, asserting the Paramount Chief's control over his territory² and, secondly, lessening the danger of violent quarrels,³ some of which could acquire political significance. Bathoefi II, like his predecessors, had banned the sale of strong liquor⁴ and was proud that Gangwaketse was a "dry" area.

Accordingly the moves to permit the sale of manufactured traditional-style beer (brand name Chibuku, alias "shake-shake") were seen by Bathoefi as a direct challenge to his authority and the customs of the Bangwaketse. In parenthesis it should be pointed out that the initiative came from the manager of the Chibuku brewery

1 SDC Minutes, 12-14 MAR 68; Minutes of [Joint Meeting of] Finance and Staff Committees, 4 FEB 68

2 See A. Sillery, op. cit., p. 71

3 I. Schapera, Tribal Innovators: Tswana Chiefs and Social Change (1970), Ch. 9 passim

4 Ibid.

in Gaborone, Mr Welly Seboni,¹ subsequently a BDP Member of Parliament, whose venture obviously had the tacit backing of the Government.² Bathoefi first ruled out of order a motion for the introduction of Chibuku and later "deferred" the question for consideration in kgotla.³ However his attempts were in vain and, although in fact his resignation from the chieftainship came just before the Council decided to permit the sale of Chibuku, it was clear that the move by this time was unstoppable.

Matimela (stray animals)

Whereas the question of beer was a policy matter, the second issue in dispute was rather symbolic. Bathoefi, while doubtless resenting the transfer of control over matimela from the Chief to the Council, did not challenge it head-on. The dispute was over the proceeds from the sale of those matimela which had been impounded prior to the effective assumption of control by the District Council. When the committee demand for the immediate sale of all matimela for 1965 and 1966 came up for debate in the full Council, the Chairman "closed the matter," and at a subsequent meeting ruled out of order an emergency motion on the same subject. It was not until late in 1967 that the matter was resolved. Ironically the Council had to ask Bathoefi in his capacity as Chief to give an order in kgotla for volunteers to collect matimela - at a cost of R500.⁴

"Council property" and boreholes

The dispute still rumbled on in another sphere, even after Bathoefi had been metamorphosed from Chief Bathoefi II to Mr Bathoefi

1 SDC Minutes, 26 JUN 68. Seboni also became Mayor of Gaborone.

2 SDC Minutes 24-25 MAR 69 (marginal notes); and letter from Permanent Secretary, MIG&L, referred to in SDC Minutes, 19-20 DEC 68.

3 Ibid., 17-18 SEP 68, 24-25 MAR 69

4 Ibid., 21-24 FEB 67, 31 JUL-2AUG 67, 25-27 SEP 67; S&F Minutes 5 APR 68

Gaseitsiwe, MP. It was alleged that he had failed to hand over all the property of the Bangwaketse Tribal Administration, including certain boreholes he was using, to the Council.¹ Eventually the Minister responsible intervened personally in a conference of the parties in dispute and announced that the matter was "settled", although in fact litigation was subsequently initiated by Bathoefi,² and a further two years was to elapse before the use of the boreholes was finally settled, nominally at least through syndication.

The Outcome

In the end Chief Bathoefi lost out all along the line in terms of the issues fought over between himself and the Council, with the central Government playing a restrained but consistent part in ensuring the desired outcome. But as will be stressed later in this chapter, his revenge was to come in political terms, with his launching of the Bangwaketse section of the Botswana National Front, culminating in his spectacular defeat of the Vice-President of the Republic in his apparently safe seat of Kanye South in the 1969 General Election.

As a footnote to the "Bathoefi Affair" per se, it should be pointed out that relations between his son, Chief Seepapitso IV, and the Government were anything but smooth, and led to Seepapitso's suspension from the post of Chief for a year by the Government. In terms of the District Council, however, since Seepapitso was never elected Chairman (the composition of the Southern District Council having been altered by Statutory Instrument)³ he was never anything

1 A good summary of this dispute was given by the retiring Secretary, in SDC Minutes, 1-4 SEP 70.

2 SDC Minutes, 1-4 SEP 70 and 10-12 NOV 70

3 For Minister's statement see Appendix "A".

other than a "backbencher", albeit a prominent one. But with the resignation of Bathoen the victory of the "new men" on the Council was secured.

THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT AS POLITICAL ARENA

The Ethnic Factor

Barolong and Bangwaketse It has already been noted that the Southern District comprises the territories of two legally recognised clans, the Bangwaketse (who make up 87% of the population) and the Barolong (13%). Each has a Paramount Chief, a Tribal Land Board and separate Tribal Administration (the funds of each of which were transferred to the District Council). The fact that the national census treated each area separately - itself indicative of official thinking - allows for ease of comparison of the two groups, and the Southern District Section of the National Development Plan points out several contrasts. Whereas 25% of the Bangwaketse (in 1971) lived in villages of over 1,000 inhabitants and a further 12% in villages of between 500 and 1,000, 100% of the Barolong lived in settlements of less than 500 persons. Compared with the national mean level of absenteeism from Botswana of 25% the figures for Barolong and Gangwaketse were respectively 30% and 40%. This figure reflects the greater opportunity for earning a cash income from agriculture (including hunting) in Barolong - 57% of cash incomes as against a mere 12% for Gangwaketse.¹ It is little wonder that Barolong is commonly referred to in English as "the Barolong Farms."²

1 Republic of Botswana, National Development Plan 1973-78, Part II: Development Plan for Local Authorities, Chapter 9, especially paras 9.1.18, 9.1.22 and Diagrams 1 and 1a.

2 The area is also characterised by a unique system of land tenure, neither fully individual, nor exactly comparable with other clans communal system. For a historical-anthropological study of the Barolong in general see J. L. Comaroff, "Competition for office and Political Processes among the Barolong" (1973)

The division of the population into two clans is reflected in a number of issues which surfaced in the Council. In the first place there was the question of symbolism. As has been noted, the Council inherited the Ngwaketse Tribal Administration letterhead (overprinted), the Bangwaketse totem, the Bangwaketse Paramount Chief as first Chairman and, above all, the name "Ngwaketse District Council." Barolong Councillors set about challenging the last feature first. Despite an early defeat by 13 votes to 11, they persisted in attempts to change the name to "Ngwaketse/Rolong" or "South" District,¹ but it was not until 1972 that the new name of Southern District - approved by the Ministry of Local Government & Lands as well as the Council - came into undisputed use. It should be noted also that, as a sop to particularist susceptibilities, the Southern District Council, almost uniquely, rotates its meetings between Kanye and Good Hope (the Barolong capital), with the occasional meeting also in Moshupa, the second largest village in Gangwaketse. Good Hope also, despite its relatively small population, received the second largest allocation of funds for the annual Independence Day celebrations.

Another, and more touchy, issue concerned land rights by clansmen in the other clan's territory. The question was raised in 1972 and referred to the Chiefs to consult their respective dikgotla. But the policy apparently remained that an exemption issued by the Minister of Local Government & Lands was required before such an application could be made.²

1 SDC Minutes, 25-27 SEP 67 and 24-25 MAR 69

2 Ibid., 23 MAY 72 and 5-7 SEP 72. This is not the only District Council to cover more than one clan territory and there is for the Government the problem of precedent.

The most serious bone of contention between the Barolong and the others however concerned the allocation of development projects.

(The case for making this assertion is considerably strengthened if the energetic Councillor for Phitshane-Molopo, a village just inside Gangwaketse but popularly regarded as a Barolong village, is included with the representatives of the Barolong Farms.) Early on, the Barolong kgotla made an early request for a sum of money in the Barolong Tribal Treasury account to be applied to the construction of teachers quarters, planned under Ipelegeng, in Borolong; the request was turned down.¹ A series of complaints were subsequently made by Barolong Councillors concerning the "inequitable" distribution of projects, the District Council's record in Borolong and in outlying areas, the "favouritism" shown to northern and central parts of the District, etc..²

In party political terms the dichotomy between the two parts of the District was brought out in the 1969 Council Election. The BNF won a majority of the seats in Gangwaketse (and would probably have won even more if it had contested all 20), but in Borolong the BDP retained a firm grasp of the Barolong seats (and Phitshane-Molopo, incidentally). This certainly reflects the prestige of Bathoefi amongst his fellow-Bangwaketse but lack of appeal to the Barolong. Table 3.1 gives the results:

TABLE 3.1
SOUTHERN DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS 1969

	<u>BDP</u> won (fought)	<u>BNF</u> won (fought)
Gangwaketse	9 (20)	11 (13)
Borolong	4 (4)	0 (1)
Total (Southern District)	13 (24)	11 (14)

1 SDC Minutes of Education Committee, 28 JUL 66

2 These were countered by allegations of Barolong failure to take "self-help" initiatives. SDC Minutes, 25-27 SEP 67; 21-24 FEB 67; 31 JUL-2 AUG 67; 1-4 SEP 70; 28 NOV 72.

Thereafter, as has been shown,¹ the share of committee seats going to Barolong Councillors went up dramatically as the BNF were definitely under-represented.

The Bakgalagadi The people of the Kalahari (Kgalagadi) area are known as the Bakgalagadi.² Those living under the traditional jurisdiction of the Paramount Chief of the Bangwaketse can therefore be regarded as a sept of the Bangwaketse clan.³ The reason for singling out this minority group rather than others (such as the émigré Bakgatla in the north east of the District, for instance) is that the Bakgalagadi Councillors were the only other group to make self-conscious demands of the Council. The big difference between their position and that of the Barolong Councillors was that the former concentrated exclusively on resource allocation (the fact that they also divided politically fairly evenly between BDP and BNF can be discounted). Another difference is that complaints started coming in from the West much later than from Borolong and were generally given a sympathetic hearing. Indeed the neglect of the arid Kalahari was openly admitted by Council officials.⁴

The conclusion which can be drawn from the amount of noise made by minority groups in the Southern District is that an ethnic basis did seem to provide more strength for complaints, and made solidarity among Councillors greater, than in areas which were composed of the dominant (nuclear) clan; but that the legal recognition of a separate

1 See above, Table 2.19

2 The name of the desert in fact is derived from the people. Sekgalagadi can be classified as a separate language from Setswana, to which it is nevertheless closely related. Both belong to the Sotho group of languages.

3 The Bakgalagadi of the Kgalagadi District are, in terms of traditional administration, independent. The definitive study is Adam Kuper, op. cit.

4 SDC Minutes, 24-25 MAR 69, 23 MAY 72, 19-21 FEB 74; 24-26 FEB 71, 30 NOV 71

Barolong identity and customary administration made for more concentration on explicit and symbolic attempts to redress what was seen as an unjust balance.

Elections

Much can be said about the trends in the District and the Council; but the hardest of all available data is electoral. Several aspects of elections will be dealt with here (but not the selection of candidates, which is a subject reserved for Chapter 7). Four parliamentary constituencies comprise the Bangwaketse part of the District while the Barolong Farms form part of the Lobatse/Barolong constituency; precise calculations about the latter are impossible although some reasonable inferences can be made.

The first Local Government Elections, in June 1966, came 15 months after the first General Election, and three months before the end of the Protectorate of Bechuanaland. The first parliamentary and local government elections both revealed a seemingly impregnable BDP position. Not only did the party win all the seats; the "Opposition" moreover was highly fragmented: in the General Election both the Bechuanaland People's Party¹ and the Botswana Independence Party fought every seat while in the Local Government election five of the seven non-BDP candidates were Independents; for the record, the only candidate of the newly formed Botswana National Front in 1966 received only 3% of the votes in a three-cornered contest where the BPP got 16%. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 give the details of the two pre-Independence elections in the Southern District and Lobatse.²

1 I.e. the "official" BPP led by P. G. Matante; K. T. Motsete was sole candidate for the "BPP-Motsete" in Lobatse/Barolong, when he polled 6.5% of the votes.

2 In those days termed the Ngwaketse District and Lobatsi.

TABLE 3.2

ELECTORAL DATA, 1965 GENERAL ELECTION - SOUTHERN DISTRICT

<u>Constituencies</u>		<u>Percentage share of vote</u>			
<u>No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BIP</u>	<u>BPP</u>	<u>BPP-Motsete</u>
27	Moshupa	95.8	2.3	1.9	--
28	Kanye South	95.7	2.0	2.3	--
29	Kanye North	95.4	2.8	1.8	--
30	Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	94.8	1.4	3.8	--
31	Lobatsi/Barolong	80.3	2.8	10.4	6.5

TABLE 3.3

SOUTHERN DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTION 1966

	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BNF</u>	<u>BPP</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Seats contested	24	1	1	5
Seats won	24	0	0	0
Share of votes in seats contested	84.5%	3%	16%	14.4%

It might have been assumed that a party as well placed as the BDP in 1965 and 1966 in the Southern District would be able to face the electorate in 1969 with assurance; yet to observers of the 1969 General Election this was manifestly not the case. Trepidation characterised Domkrag as they entered the electoral fray, not least in the South. The crunch was symbolised by Kanye South. Here ex-Chief Bathoefi chose to take on the prestige of the Republic's engaging and active Vice-President, Quett Masire, in a classic clash between the "new men" and the ancien régime.

Local Government Elections were, by now, synchronised with the Parliamentary General Election.¹ No doubt when the Government decided to do this it was counting on the twin advantages of the coat-tails effect and the avoidance of any mid-term backlash. But, in the Southern District, whose coat-tails would prove more effective?

1 See above, p. 27

There seems little doubt, certainly, that the electorate treated the two elections as one - an attitude assisted by the mechanics of the electoral system, whereby a coloured disc represented the chosen party (red or black for BDP and BNF respectively). At any rate the total votes cast in Gangwaketse in 1974 (when both parties contested every seat) varied by only a tiny fraction (0.13%), and the parties' share of those votes varied by only 0.2% between the Parliamentary and Local Government results. The inference therefore can clearly be drawn that voters did not split their ticket.

Returning to 1969, the picture was obscured for the political scientist by the BNF's failure to contest a number of seats, some of them winnable. This was no accident: one factor which decided President Khama to hold an election a year early was his realisation of the impact of Bathoen's joining the National Front and a determination to move before the Front could organise itself properly. In the Parliamentary election, the BNF failed to lodge nomination papers in time to contest Moshupa, which then went to the BDP candidate (a member of the Cabinet, E. S. Masisi) unopposed; it would almost certainly have been retained by Masisi in any case. More serious for the Front was its failure to put up candidates for the Council at Nyorosi (which they would likely have won) and Ntlhayatlase (which fell to the BNF in a subsequent by-election); a seat which with hindsight was highly marginal, Ranaka, was another one where the BDP got a walkover.

The General Election was a landslide victory for the BNF in the Southern District. Bathoen won Kanye South from Dr. Masire with 71.1% of the vote, while his less illustrious colleagues scored 71.4% in Kanye North and 60.2% in Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi. Lobatse/Barolong stayed comfortably Domkrag, despite an anti-BDP swing of 18.3%; as the BNF

received over half the Town Council election votes in Lobatse, it is clear that it was the Barolong who saved the constituency for B. C. Thema, the Minister of Education. Table 3.4 gives details.

TABLE 3.4

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS 1969, SOUTHERN DISTRICT AND LOBATSE

<u>Constituencies</u>		<u>Percentage share of votes</u>		
<u>No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BNF</u>	<u>BPP</u>
27	Moshupa	unopposed		
28	Kanye South	28.9	71.1	--
29	Kanye North	28.6	71.4	--
30	Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	39.8	60.2	--
31	Lobatse/Barolong	62.0	33.7	4.2
<hr/>				
28-30	Contested seats, Gangwaketse	33.8	66.2	
28-31	Contested seats, Southern District and Lobatse	42.6	57.4	(two party share)
part of 31	Borolong (estimated)	86	14	approx.

The District Council election results were a shade less satisfactory for the BNF. In the event they won 11 of the 14 seats they contested, but failed to gain a majority on the 24-seat Council - a majority which was within their grasp had they put up three more candidates, even if BDP control would have been assured by the Government's power to nominate additional members. Table 3.5 gives details of "B II's revenge" on the Council.

TABLE 3.5

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION RESULTS - SOUTHERN DISTRICT, 1969

	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BNF</u>
Candidates	24	14
Seats won	13	11
Candidates unopposed	10	0
Share of vote in contested seats	34%	66%

Thus Bathoen's revenge was only partial and led rather to a polarisation in the District - a polarisation accentuated moreover in the Council chamber with ethnic overtones. In these respects the Southern District election results reflected the national results.

The period between the 1969 and 1974 elections reflected the continuing tension between the parties. In by-elections which took place during Session II the BNF captured a Council seat in 1971 - Ntlhayatlase, in the Kanye North parliamentary constituency - which they had failed to contest in 1969, and held their seat at Moshaneng in the same constituency (in 1970). The Barolong seat of Good Hope however remained safely in the hands of the BDP in the 1971 by-election.¹ Another gain for the BDP came with the defection of the BNF Councillor for Mmathethe (in the Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi constituency) to the BDP in 1970. Thus the party composition of the Council - ignoring nominated Councillors - was the same at the end of the Session as at the beginning.

In the 1974 election the chips were down between National Front and Democratic Party - a fact reflected in the highest turnout (41%) of any District in Botswana. On the one hand the BDP felt confident that support for the BNF was ebbing away: on the other hand there were a number of seats, uncontested by the BNF in 1969, where the outcome was uncertain. The Local Government Election tested the theories completely insofar as it was a straight fight between the two parties in all the seats in Gangwaketse; the supremacy of the BDP in Borolong however was unchallenged. In the event, as shown by Table 3.6, the BDP achieved a healthy swing towards itself but there were consolation prizes for the BNF in two seats. In summary, the BDP gained two seats and held two potentially marginal seats where it had been unopposed in 1969. The Front on the other hand held its

1 References: BDN, 25 MAY 71; 2 OCT 70; 30 NOV 71

by-election gain, and repeated its victory over the BDP candidate - this time the carpet-crossing Councillor - in Mmathethe. Probably the most significant figure is the swing in comparable seats of +14.4% to Domkrag: for all contested seats the rise in the BDP vote was 11.5%. Another feature of some significance was the proportionally greater success of existing Councillors (including nominated Councillors) who contested the 1974 Local Government elections.

TABLE 3.6

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION RESULTS - SOUTHERN DISTRICT 1974

	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BNF</u>
Candidates	24	20
Seats won	14	10
Candidates unopposed	4	0
Share of vote in contested seats	55.5%	44.5%
Turnout: 41.2%		

In the Parliamentary election the story was similar, albeit complicated by changes in constituency boundaries. These facilitated, but do not of themselves alone account for the notable victory scored by Vice-President Quett Masire in winning the (revised) constituency of Ngwaketse-Kgalagadi from the sitting MP, Patrick Tshane. Masire's courage in fighting in his home district rather than taking a safe seat elsewhere was saluted by rejoicing crowds of Domkrag supporters in Gaborone, who saw it as a knock-out blow against "tribalist" (i.e. BNF) politics. The BDP also held comfortably the seat of Moshupa, where it had been unopposed in 1969 (and increased its majority in Lobatse/Barolong), although failing to achieve much success in the (new) Kanye North and South constituencies. Figures are given in Table 3.7.

TABLE 3.7

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS 1974, SOUTHERN DISTRICT AND LOBATSE

<u>Constituency</u>		<u>Percentage share of votes</u>	
<u>No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>BDP</u>	<u>BNF</u>
27	Moshupa	75.6	24.4
28	Kanye South	33.6	64.6
29	Kanye North	37.2	62.8
30	Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi	67.3	33.7
31	Lobatse/Barolong	80.8	19.2
<hr/>			
27-30	Gangwaketse	55.3	44.7
27-31	Southern District and Lobatse	59.6	40.4
28-30	BNF "base"	45.8	54.2
Estimated swing to BDP, +12% approx.			
part of 31	Borolong (estimated)	92	8
approx.			
<hr/>			

In summary, then, the 1974 elections saw a substantial recovery of the BDP's position in both Parliamentary and Local Government elections in the south. The uneven impact of the rise of the BNF as the Opposition to the BDP is illustrated however by comparing the four Council seats which were contested in 1966 with the 1974 results. At one extreme the BDP vote rose over this period by 11% in one seat (Manyana) and at the other fell by no less than 64% (in Mmatshitswana). Clearly, then, the mere presence of an "Opposition" candidate does not cast much light on the impact on the voter.

The parties

If then the party label is important, what is it that distinguishes the parties from each other? Repeatedly the answer given to this question in interviews was to the effect that the only real distinction was between the "ins" and the "outs" and that this had little to do with policy. It would be facile - yet probably correct - to conclude that the status of the party leadership was the crucial factor (i.e.

that any party supported by Chief Bathoen would have done equally well in Gañwaketse). But first it is necessary to review the occasions on which there appeared to be a difference between the parties in the Council, and/or a clear party policy particularly from the National Front side. The number of such occasions, it must be stressed, is small.

The BNF had acquired, in the urban areas at least, the reputation of being a radical/populist party, the champion of the poor and the low-paid. It was therefore to be expected that the party in local government would adopt the same sort of stance. One or two examples bear this out, the first being the party's total opposition to the imposition of a bicycle tax (on a vote on bye-laws supported by all but one of the BDP Councillors) on the grounds that this was an imposition with no concomitant benefits in the form of maintenance of cycle tracks. Another issue was that of school fees: BNF Councillors asked first for a reduction in school fees,¹ and pled subsequently for leniency in dealing with those unable to pay the fees on time and financial assistance for the poorest parents; the latter motion was defeated. A further instance was a motion tabled by a BNF Councillor to "consider about farmers who plough many fields."²

Another topic raised by the BNF nationally was race relations and in particular any vestiges of European privileges which still remained after Independence. Here again the party in the Southern District asked some pointed questions, e.g. why there were still segregated cemeteries,³ and why a white District Commissioner presided over a

1 SDC Minutes, 1-4 SEP 70 and 25-26 MAY 71. These policies were later adopted by the Government.

2 SDC Minutes, 30 NOV 71; SDC Agenda 11 JUN 74

3 SDC Minutes, 30 NOV 71

court while a black District Commissioner did not.¹ The Front also complained that the Mazezuru (a religious sect of Rhodesian origin who made a living as tinkers) did not pay taxes or hold licences for hawking;² what is interesting about this initiative is that the BNF line was quite the opposite from the approach adopted by the People's Party, whose leader, Philip Matante, was known as a champion of the Mazezuru and other immigrants with problems.

If the BNF had a radical reputation in its early days, the accession of Chief Bathoen to the party immediately cast doubts in many people's minds as to how a conservative if not reactionary figure like the ex-Paramount Chief of the Bangwaketse could fit in to a radical party. And if there was to be a traditionalist wing of the Front - or indeed a general shift in policy towards traditionalism - the Southern BNF was obviously the section where this would be in evidence. What is interesting is that the BNF did not adopt a traditionalist policy, or at any rate not a consistent one. Thus while a BNF motion calling on the Kanye Museum to be named after its (aristocratic) founder may have seemed to confirm the BNF position, it was outweighed by a much more significant motion in the same meeting to abolish, or at least restrict, corporal punishment in customary courts; the amended motion was successful. Even more strikingly, it was the BDP who proposed a motion for the introduction of bye-laws to make attendance at kgotla meetings compulsory and the BNF who opposed it on the grounds, firstly, that it would mean the revival of the old chieftainship's policy of labour regiments, and secondly that it was contrary to central Government

1 SDC Minutes, 23 MAY 72 (The answer was that the latter was in fact not a District Commissioner but a District Assistant.)

2 Ibid., 6 MAR 73, On this occasion the BNF was successful with its initiative.

policy!¹ One possible interpretation of this anti-traditionalist line is that some, at least, of the BNF Councillors were aware of the unpopularity of Chief Bathoen's past harsh rule and of the authoritarian streak which seemed to be emerging in the rule of his son and successor, Chief Seepapitso IV, culminating in a classic High Court case on corporal punishment, which the young Chief lost.²

Mention has been made of the radical tradition in the BNF. In two instances however the party seemed to be advocating a free enterprise approach, namely to the question of water. Proposals were made that the Council should sell its dams "to some members of the tribe who are financially able," and that "all council boreholes situated in agricultural areas be sold to members of communities who [live] around them."³ A rather contradictory motion urged that the District Council run its own bus service.⁴

The policies of the parties may be none too easy to define; rather easier to determine is the attitude towards parties. Official mistrust of (opposition) "politics" is reflected in statements such as the speech of the Assistant Community Development Officer to the Council in which he warned Councillors to keep politics out of public meetings attended by Community Development staff as this would lead to "misunderstandings"; the Education Secretary in a report detailed certain private schools as having "Party Political Affiliation."⁵ The central Government moreover on one occasion removed a BNF Councillor from the Ngwaketse Land

1 SDC Minutes, 7-10 SEP 71, 5-7 SEP 72

2 BDN, 22 NOV 72

3 SDC Minutes, 20-21 FEB 73

4 Ibid., 22-23 FEB 72

5 Ibid., 7-10 SEP 71; Education Committee Minutes, 9 MAY 72

Board.¹ The official mistrust of the BNF was reciprocated: witness an unsuccessful motion calling for party scrutineers to be present during the processing of Council (internal) elections, "because officials do not count nominations properly."²

The attitude of the parties towards each other however was rather more constructive. For instance, applications by the BNF for the use of a Council hall, and by the BDP for the use of the Kanye showground for a fête were approved without any difficulty.³ Against this must be set the fact (already discussed) of BNF underrepresentation on Standing Committees of the Council.

This last point brings out what is probably the most important aspect of the party system: parties are an electoral machine, organised to win representation on the Council and in Parliament, and able to reward members with positions of prestige thereafter (including the Government's power to nominate additional Councillors, and in effect to co-opt four extra MPs to the National Assembly). At the Council level at any rate little guidance to policy is inherent in the party system, only the inclination or instinct by the BDP to support "official" policy and by the BNF to question it. Perhaps there might have been a clearer policy division between the two sides had there been a Leader of the BNF in the Council, particularly when the BDP side was led by the experienced former MP for Kanye North, B. R. Chibana.⁴ The BNF's leader could have been Chief Seepapitso, but in effect it was left to a non-Councillor, ex-Chief Bathoen, as "party boss" in the District, to organise meetings of the party caucus. This he did however too

1 SDC Minutes, 7-10 SEP 71

2 Ibid., 20-21 FEB 73

3 Report of General Purposes Committee JUL-SEP 69; SDC Minutes 10-12 NOV 70

4 Subsequently co-opted back into Parliament, but retaining his position as SDC Chairman.

intermittently to provide an adequate substitute for an active leader in the Council chamber. This factor would contribute towards an explanation of the very different levels of organisation and cohesion visible between the BNF in the Southern District Council and the BPP in the North East District Council.

CHAPTER 4

THE CENTRAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

No study of local government and politics in Botswana could afford to ignore the Central District, whose role in the political system of the Republic is generally, and rightly, regarded as crucial. There are several reasons for scrutiny of the District. In the first place it covers 25% of the total land area of Botswana, and a much higher proportion of agricultural land as half the country is accounted for by the Kalahari semi-desert. More significantly, its population comprises no less than 43% of Botswana's rural population (36% of the total).¹ Apart from the North West District Council (which receives substantial revenues from game hunting licences) it is the wealthiest of the District Councils and started its life with reserves of R300,000,² inherited from the Bamangwato Tribal Administration; it is little wonder that the Central District Council is sometimes regarded as the model District Council.

In political terms too the District is, from the BDP viewpoint, a model one. All twelve of the constituencies which fall within the District are safe Domkrag seats, the most marginal indeed having a BDP majority in 1966 of 23.1%, while the Democratic Party's share of the poll in Serowe North in that year was 98.5% (the candidate being

1 National Development Plan 1973-78, Part III para 1.152

2 Central District Council Minutes, 15-17 SEP 71

Sir Seretse Khama). Overall the BDP polled very nearly 90% of the votes cast in the Central District in the General Elections of 1965 and 1969. In Local Government Elections, moreover, the pattern of BDP dominance was equally evident, the party winning 31 out of the 32 seats on the Council in 1966 and 1969, many of them unopposed.

The loyalty shown to the BDP in the Central District is an amalgam of two factors: the generally conservative views of the rural Setswana-speaking districts and the overwhelming personal loyalty commanded by Sir Seretse Khama, who was heir to the Chieftainship of the Bangwato and so is still greeted to this day in Serowe more often as "Kgosi" (Chief) than "Tau-Tona" (President). The strength of Bangwato clan identity moreover is the obvious factor accounting for the failure of the Opposition to gain a Parliamentary foothold in the Kalanga-speaking area of the Central District (known as the Bokalaka), in sharp contrast to the position in the Kalanga-speaking North East District, which is a BPP stronghold.

The particular interest of the Central District Council for this study lies in the fact of its single party (or virtually single-party)¹ composition. It can thus be seen as a test bed for examining the argument advanced by Vengroff² in favour of turning Botswana into a one-party state although, as Tordoff³ and Vengroff acknowledge, much would have to be done to the BDP before anything significant could be expected of it. The Central District Council, then, provides a picture of a one-party Council, "untreated".

1 Apart from a period of two years from mid-1967 to the end of the First Session, the BPP held one seat on the Council.

2 R. Vengroff, "Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana," (1972), Ch VI.

3 Tordoff, Pilane & Sarpong, Report of the Local Government Study Group, (1970), Ch. 11 (a).

Of secondary interest is the relationship between the traditional authorities of the Bangwato and the District Council, which after all was set up to democratise local government and reduce the power of the Chiefs. If a special relationship exists anywhere between ruling party and aristocracy, it would be found in this District. It should be noted that here one is talking about relations with the traditional institution of clan government, free of the complication of a strong and well-entrenched personality (such as Chief Bathoefi, par excellence, in the Southern District). The bulk of Central District is Bangwato clan territory, although the District also includes the Nata Crown Lands (later State Lands) in the north, extending to the Rhodesian border, and the Tuli Block of Freehold (almost entirely white) farmers along the Limpopo (the border with South Africa).¹

In this chapter there will be an examination of the attitudes of Councillors to various problems and issues which appear significant, and particular items of controversy will be studied. It will be found that the major clashes did not occur on questions of policy (certainly not party policy, by definition), but that disputes were largely along institutional battle lines, with the Councillors in most cases operating as a body against other groups (or individuals). The process of planning and the allocation of resources come in for considerable scrutiny. The concluding section discusses the District as a political arena and draws some conclusions concerning the working of the "democratic system" and its relationship with other forces in the District.

1 The mining town of Selebi-Phikwe, now run by a Town Council, was excised from the Central District, which surrounds it, in 1971.

INTERNAL WORKINGS

Procedure

If the Central District is vast and rambling, the same could be said of its meetings (which not infrequently lasted three days) and its voluminous minutes, which has advantages for the researcher in giving details of discussion as well as decisions. As in the Southern District, the lack of a Setswana version of the Handbook was a contributing factor towards the sloppy application of procedure,¹ manifested particularly in the haphazard application of the Standing Order that provided for the automatic referral of motions to the appropriate committees.² But whereas in the Southern District the Chairman exercised this power, in the Central District it was usually the Council Secretary's advice that was followed on this question. Moreover officials habitually replied to Councillors' questions³ and indeed the Secretary was quite capable of dismissing a motion as "unnecessary"⁴ and it is the Secretary who emerges as the dominant influence in guiding Council business throughout, rather than the Chairman (who in the First Session was the Acting Chief).

Officials

As head of the administration, and as an educated, professional administrator, a Council Secretary clearly has the potential to play a prominent role in his Council. In the case of the Central District, the individual concerned, Mr L. M. Seretse, combined an agreeable personal manner with an aristocratic family background, years of experience in the Bangwato Tribal Administration and close ties with

1 CDC Minutes, 19 NOV 69

2 Criticised in a letter from Permanent Secretary, MIG&L, to Secretary, CDC, 12 AUG 68

3 Ibid., for criticism of this.

4 CDC, Agenda for meeting of 7-9 OCT 68. This sort of behaviour came increasingly under challenge from Councillors in the Second Session.

the President (his cousin). Towards the end of the Second Session he resigned from his post, subsequently to enter Parliament, and quickly rose to become Assistant Minister of Local Government & Lands. Much of the esteem in which the Central District Council was held in Gaborone was due to his personal contribution and that of his deputy and other officers. His position was further strengthened by the changes in chairmanship of the Council, owing firstly to the changes in the post of Tribal Authority,¹ and, secondly, to the change to an elective basis for the Chair in the Second Session.

This position of power did not however go unchallenged. Examples abound of minor reverses suffered by the Secretary at the hands of Councillors, such as rejection of his draft agreement on cattle auction sales, dissatisfaction at the handling of appointments, a refusal to accept the Secretary's ruling that the Treasurer could attend only certain committees, and a rejection of his views on the tactics of applying to the Government for an increase in allowances.² A more serious row occurred over the nomination by the Chairman and Secretary of the Council of members to serve on the Licensing Committee for the newly-constituted township of Selebi-Phikwe:³ Councillors obviously felt that the executive had gone too far in encroaching on their prerogative of electing members to serve on committees, the power to confer status (expenses paid) to Councillors. But the culmination of resentment felt by Councillors came with a dramatic debate⁴ on a motion described by Mr Seretse as one of "no confidence" in the

1 I.e. Acting Chief

2 Finance & General Purposes Committee Minutes, 19 JUL 67; CDC Minutes, 22-23 MAR 72; F&GP Minutes, 25 SEP 72; CDC Minutes, 27-28 SEP 72

3 For coverage of Selebi-Phikwe, see the local newspaper Puisano, now defunct.

4 Witnessed by the writer.

Secretary over his handling of the question of increasing Councillors' allowances. Councillors suspected that the Secretary, whose personal opposition to the resolution in question had been made plain, had failed to pass the message on to the Ministry. In the end an apology by the Secretary and an amendment by a Councillor led to the reestablishment of amicable relations.¹

In trying to assess the extent of the Council Secretary's power, it is clear that sometimes decisions were simply not implemented, in varying circumstances, as indicated in the following remarks by Councillors: "all had not been going well. Many decisions had not been implemented."² This did not however inhibit the Secretary from laying down the law and overruling a committee (in correspondence with the Ministry) nor on commenting (on a motion condemning the Land Board) that District Councils were not that impressive or popular either! Another manifestation of the influence of the Secretary was his practice of touring the District and then using his tour to make various recommendations about local matters to the Council and on one occasion direct (and successfully) to the Government.³ Although the Secretary was occasionally challenged or rebuked over the extent of his authority internally, he was on stronger ground when responding to any outside challenge. Thus criticism by a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly⁴ was refuted by the Secretary and his action endorsed by the Council, who likewise approved of his blunt criticism

1 CDC Minutes, 27-28 JUN 73; see also 20-21 MAR 73

2 CDC Minutes, 10-11 MAR 69, 22 JUN 71

3 Ibid., 21-22 JUN 72; 20-21 MAR 73; 22 JUN 71, and 13-14 DEC 72; Health & Works Committee Minutes, 15-16 NOV 72; 12-13 DEC 72; 24 JUL 73

4 Hansard, 24, p. 422 (31 MAR 68)

of the Government's failure to provide financial support for obligations laid statutorily upon the Council.¹

Other officials' actions likewise met with varying responses from Councillors, sometimes getting through despite queries, on other occasions being subject to censure.² The controversial Education Secretary in particular was at the centre of a recurrent storm of criticism, but this cause célèbre merits separate treatment later in this chapter.

Councillors' Remuneration and Facilities

The row in 1973 (adverted to above) over the Council Secretary's handling of Councillors' applications for an increase in their allowances was merely the most dramatic example of members' concern for their own financial well-being and facilities. Starting with the Preparatory Commission in 1966, and again in 1968, 1969, 1973 and 1974 motions were passed demanding increases in Councillors' allowances.³ In many instances the Council Secretary's doubts were swept aside but in at least two cases the Ministry took the same view as the Secretary.⁴ Still, the pressure coming from a number of Councils, if not all, did have its effect, and allowances were progressively increased over the years.

Less success attended Councillors' efforts to improve the facilities available to them to perform their functions as representatives of large areas (half or one-third of a Parliamentary constituency).

1 CDC Minutes, 15-16 JUL 68, 20-21 MAR 73

2 Education Committee Minutes, 26-27 OCT 72, 12-14 JUL 73

3 Central District Preparatory Commission Minutes 23-24 MAR 66; CDC Minutes 18-19 MAR 68, 27-28 SEP 69, 20-21 MAR 73, 27-28 MAR 74

4 CDC Minutes, 20-22 JUL 67 (marginal comments), CDC Minutes, 20-23 FEB 67, 20-22 JUL 67

A question asked in the early days of the Council as to whether Councillors could have the use of Tribal Administration offices was answered in the negative. More surprisingly, a motion to allow Councillors the use of Tribal Administration telephones was defeated by 15 votes to 11, and the Secretary ruled that Councillors, not being "officials", were not allowed free Central District Council stationery.¹

All of this must have been rather discouraging to Councillors - who were under the impression that the new system was to take over many of the functions of the traditional administrative system - but they appeared to accept the position fairly tamely. The same was not true of the question of the provision of Government Gazettes free to all Councillors. In spite of the Council Secretary's opposition the Council voted to provide all Councillors (not just committee Chairmen) with free copies of the Gazette. Two years later when nothing had been done to bring this about a similar motion was again passed. This time the Ministry of Local Government & Lands vetoed the resolution.² With unconscious irony the Minister of Local Government & Lands in his address to Council two months later urged all Councillors to read the Government Gazette so as to be fully informed of laws and statutory instruments.³ The whole episode does tend to bear out Gunderson's labelling of Botswana as an "administrative state"⁴ in which information is controlled by officialdom.

1 CDC Minutes 20-23 FEB 67, 20-22 JUL 67

2 Ibid., 20-22 JUL 67, 23-25 JUN 69, 15 SEP 69

3 Ibid., 19 NOV 69

4 G. L. Gunderson, "Nation-Building and the Administrative State: The Case of Botswana" (1970)

Issues

One of the most striking features of the Central District Council is the lack of controversy on many items. This does not mean that discussion was perfunctory - quite the reverse - but rather that the detailed attention paid to a whole range of questions only rarely raised matters of policy or principle. The degree of consensus, and indeed fundamentally conservatism, amongst Councillors was palpable. A prime example is education: despite the large number of mentions which education rates there is very little of political interest in the decisions or debates and, apart from the odd instance of pressure group activity,¹ the main context in which education matters caused controversy was central-local government relations.²

Water, Land and Cattle As might be expected, however, the primary economic interest of a cattle-rearing people did give rise to certain decisions of principle. The first of these concerned the ownership of boreholes and the linked question of the spacing between them and the exclusive use of grazing land which borehole ownership in effect conferred. As in the Southern District, Council's policy on ownership from the outset was the normal one of favouring syndicates as opposed to individual owners.³ (It should be pointed out that the degree of communalism which syndication involves in practice varies considerably, in accordance with the strength and persistence of individual farmers, especially in times of drought.) This policy was implemented for purely grazing land but when it came to boreholes in the fields ("lands"),

1 E.g. from the newly established Anglican diocese of Botswana (Education Committee Minutes, 12 OCT 73).

2 Concerning questions such as recognition of schools (Education Committee Report MAR-JUN 67), or the English-medium school in Mahalapye (mentioned below), or the financial burden of primary education (CDC Minutes, 15-17 SEP 71).

3 CDC Minutes 12 SEP 66, 15-16 JUL 68, 21-22 JUN 72

situated some distance from the "permanent" or official villages, the policy became something of a football between different factions. Thus the Acting Chief intervened successfully (as the passage below shows), even if his victory turned out not to be a lasting one. In his capacity as Council Chairman he

reported that during his tour of the District people did not accept Councils' resolution about lands' boreholes being taken over and run by syndicates. He said that people regarded lands' boreholes as village boreholes. . . . It was RESOLVED by a majority vote that Council would reverse its former decision and continue to maintain and run lands' boreholes. . . . ¹

The Council accepted the policy of the Ngwato Land Board, once it was set up, that boreholes should be sited at least six miles apart from each other (later amended to five miles), although debating the problems of unlimited access by non-owners of boreholes to water.²

Another question of principle which appeared briefly was that of the sale of water, particularly in the large villages (or towns) such as Serowe and Mahalapye. The principle was accepted without question, although the "right" to water (where it can be found) was as popularly believed in as the right to land, and it was left to the District Development Committee to grapple with the problem at some length; the Council was concerned only with the details of the draft agreement urged upon it by the Government.³ Either Councillors were unaware of the potential trouble water fees would cause; or were prepared to sit back and let the Government's Department of Water Affairs carry the can.

1 CDC Minutes 20-22 JUL 67 (emphasis added).

2 Ibid., 14-17 SEP 70, 22-23 MAR 72

3 CDC Minutes 20-23 FEB 67; Central DDC Minutes, 24 FEB 72, 15 MAY 72; H&W Minutes, 15-16 NOV 72.

A more fundamental issue, and one which may yet prove the thorniest problem of all for Botswana, is that of fencing. The mere suggestion of fencing communal land in the early days of independence was so emotive that it was almost automatically turned down by the people. Yet after the 1974 election the Government has moved with increasing boldness into discussions of land conservation which involve fencing, to some extent at least.¹ The Government's policy change, of course, falls outside the period studied but it is of interest to see what happened when this topic was raised in the Bangwato heartland.

When a motion was first introduced in favour of fencing (by a Tuli Block [freehold] farmer) it was decisively defeated, and at a committee meeting the following year it was reported that "the tribe had totally rejected the introduction of fences on tribal land," although some Councillors declared themselves in favour of the organised fencing-off of fields from grazing land.²

In 1971 however the startling communication was made to the Council from the Ngwato Land Board to the effect that the Board "in principle accepted the idea of fencing grazing areas to improve the main industry of the country." A major debate followed which concluded with the resolution:

That in view of the controversial nature of the subject it should be put to the people for purposes of explanation, and that Councillors go back to their wards to discuss the matter with them before they could commit Council to a decision which might not have emanated from popular opinion.³

1 Government Paper No. 2 of 1975: National policy on Tribal grazing land

2 CDC Minutes, 12 SEP 66; Minutes of Planning Sub-Committee of Community & Economic Development Committee, 29 JUN 67; CDC Minutes, 20-22 JUL 67

3 CDC Minutes 22 JUN 71 (emphasis added); ibid., 15-17 SEP 71, 20 DEC 71

The Ministry of Local Government & Lands were however so alarmed by the prospect of a district-wide debate on this topic that they quickly "called a halt to further discussions either at Council or Kgotla levels" and an Agriculture Ministry spokesman warned against going too far ahead of public opinion on land conservation.¹ Clearly the paternalist tradition in Gaborone was at work here: policy innovations had to come from the centre to be acceptable.

Apart from the above matters of principle, controversy mainly followed administrative or institutional lines. The generally unpopular Department of Water Affairs² (and also Geological Surveys, which prospected for water) gave rise to frequent criticism in all Councils, not least the Central District, and this is dealt with in Chapter 8. Likewise the subject of subordinate Land Boards, which is one (but the most important) aspect of the question of decentralisation in the District is reviewed below.

The story of relations between the Central District Council and the Ngwato Land Board is one of gradual deterioration. In its early days Council was happy to endorse the establishment of the Board - only stipulating that the Chief (also Council Chairman) be a permanent member of the Board - and to lend it a sizeable sum to finance its administration. The official amalgamation of the staffs of the two bodies did not however prevent criticism of the lack of co-ordination between them, and the Council on one occasion implicitly vetoed a Land Board decision by referring it back. Matters came to a head with a

1 CDC Minutes, 15-17 SEP 71, 20 DEC 71

2 The Department's own defence, that it was chronically short of manpower even to fill its establishment, partially explains the situation but merely shifts the blame to the Government as a whole.

motion that "in view of the Ngwato Land Board's failure to discharge its functions satisfactorily, recommendations to the Ministry be made that the board be dissolved and new members appointed."¹

Although the motion was defeated (following interventions by both the District Commissioner and the Council Secretary), the inefficiency of the board, the lack of consultation, and the popular discontent were freely acknowledged. A contributing factor moreover was the Ministry's refusal to allow Headmen and Sub-Chiefs to continue to deal with minor matters such as extensions to fields and courtyards: an object lesson of the difficulties inherent in replacing a well-established and decentralised traditional system with a new and centralised one. There can be little doubt that this policy decision was due not to lack of foresight but to the Government's determination to drive home the point that there was a new order in the land. Criticism of the Ngwato Land Board came both from conservatives and from those who were impatient with the membership of the Board. The fact that all involved were BDP members did nothing to affect the feelings aroused by the whole question, nor the outcome.

A similar problem was posed by matimela, something which the Government was keen to see Councils take over from the traditional authorities.² One aspect of the problem concerned who was to inform the people about matimela - the Chief and Headmen or the Councillors. A more serious headache was the financial one. Whereas under the traditional system matimela had been a recognised source of revenue and had caused few serious administrative problems, in transferring it

1 CDC Minutes, 15-16 JUL 68, 24 JUN 70, 13-14 DEC 72; Serowe Planning Sub-Committee Minutes, 17 SEP 73; CDC Minutes, 20-21 MAR 73

2 F&GP Minutes, 25 MAY 67 (marginal comment); BDN 26 SEP 67.

to the Councils it seemed to become transformed overnight from an asset to a liability.¹ The costs which now came into the open may well have been concealed under the old régime, which relied on the Chiefs' complex network of contacts. Again it seems this problem was caused by the Government's determination to replace the traditional system (including the patronage and funds which went along with it) with a new, bureaucratised and accountable one even at the risk of unpopularity. The sheer size of the Central District (compared with the Southern District) made the problem that much more difficult.

Commerce The District Council's policy on trading was a conservative one. Thus it was laid down at the outset that viability had to be demonstrated before applications to extend licences could be approved, and not long afterwards the licensing authority recommended that no further applications for licences be considered unless requested by the Chief. The only attempts to achieve minor modifications in the approach of the Licensing Committee were the suggestions made by a Councillor to involve local opinion in cases where there were rival applications or disputes over the granting of licences, and the Secretary's reporting of an initiative from a national District Development Conference to relax hygiene regulations in order to encourage small shopkeepers in smaller villages.²

1 Even as late as 1972 the CDC Secretary criticised the Government for failing to provide sufficient funds for matimela collection, and a year later it was stated that "Council is using huge sums of money to get water for Matimela." CDC Minutes, 20-22 JUL 67, 20-21 MAR 72 C&ED Minutes; 24 MAY 73.

2 C&ED Report, AUG 66; C&ED Minutes 10 FEB 67; CDC Minutes 23-25 JUN 69, 13-14 DEC 72

The Council's attitude towards engaging in commercial activity itself was unenthusiastic.¹ For instance it specifically declared itself in favour of private enterprise over the processing and marketing of hides and skins,² and rejected (by 19 votes to 3) a motion in favour of grain buying by the Council;³ it had earlier accepted the statement that the Government was not in favour of such a policy anyway as it would tie up too much capital. The only exception to the general policy was the Council's decision to run an abattoir in Serowe, but this was on health grounds.⁴

Councillors were particularly opposed to the excessive granting of licences to hawkers, and resolved to lobby their MPs during the the passage of a Bill before Parliament. A committee

was in favour of Hawkers being limited, and the encouragement of Business Licencees to take out Hawkers Licences instead so as to be able to supply those in outlying areas adjacent to their shops."⁵

Faced however with the necessity of applying the law on hawking, a firm policy of keeping hawkers at least five miles away from shops was adopted and reiterated several times.⁶ Moreover the Council were willing to assure de Beers (the big South African mining company) that no hawking licences would be granted in mining areas, in accordance with the Company's policy.⁷

1 In this it was in line with the later policy of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry which preferred to keep any new publicly sponsored enterprises under its wing.

2 Minutes, Planning Sub-Committee of C&ED Committee, 26 MAY 67

3 CDC Minutes, 10-11 MAR 69. Interestingly, one of the movers of the motion was an aristocratic member of Council. (The Ministry of Agriculture official who attended the meeting - in order to press his pet project of a sports stadium - said he had no knowledge of the technical problems involved in grain storage!)

4 Minutes, Planning Sub-Committee, C&ED Committee, 26 MAY 67

5 F&GP Report, SEP 66 - FEB 67

6 CDC Minutes 10-11 MAR 69; Licensing Committee Minutes 29 SEP 72, and 29 JUN 73

7 Ibid, 31 AUG 73. Basically on security grounds (in the diamond mines case).

Councillors' Interests

It should not be thought, however, that Councillors were defending their own personal interests - an allegation made concerning the Licensing Committee in another district - but rather that their views favoured traders in general. Indeed on two occasions the suggestion that a Councillor was putting forward proposals to benefit himself led to a hostile reaction from other Councillors. In one case a Councillor was rebuked publicly for bringing up his own personal interests in the form of a motion.¹ Even more significant was the failure of the ex-Tribal Authority of the Bangwato himself to get approval for plans for a tourist enterprise (rumoured to be a Holiday Inn hotel-casino complex) in the east of the District, and for a brewery in Serowe. The only other case to come to light was a series of questions asked by a Councillor who owned many cattle concerning cattle sales in his area.²

Destitution

One of the distressing duties of the Councils was the relief of destitution. It was a much more prominent problem in the Central District than in the other two districts, possibly just because everything in the Central District was writ large. In the mythology (and probably reality) of the old traditional system the Chiefs and their underlings took care of those whom even the extended family system - so characteristic of and fundamental to African society - had left with no means of support whatsoever. Moreover, while the old clan system

1 CDC Minutes 22 JUN 71; the voting on the motion was 17-11.

2 Ibid., 3-5 OCT 73 and 24-25 MAR 71

may have made the Chief the wealthiest individual, it did also have the virtue of being a self-balancing system in financial (or resource) terms. Thus income from court fines and matimela cattle was expended inter alia on destitutes.

So serious did the problem appear to the Council in 1969 that "others in despair felt that Council should stop any relief of destitutes since Council could not hope to cater for all destitutes in the district."¹ The number of destitutes in 1973 was estimated at 4,000, and provision was made for them at the rate of R7.50 per annum (or R7.00 plus burial costs): total cost R30,000.²

Nor was the scale of the problem the only intractable aspect: equally difficult was the identification of genuine destitutes. It was never completely resolved as to who should locate destitutes - Councillors or Headmen. Certainly many Councillors failed to submit lists of names by the deadlines requested; yet perversely refused on one occasion to allow certain "vacancies" thus left to be filled by a surplus of names from the quasi-urban centre of Mahalapye. In similar vein protests were made by Councillors from remote wards at the favouring of the district capital of Serowe.³

The question of destitution is another illustration of the difficulties attendant upon replacing the old and familiar system with a new one. The Councillors who formed the District Council seemed to sense that it provided possibilities of patronage, but these were outweighed by the disadvantages of being involved in the invidious task of selection; hence the hesitant, rather negative approach to the whole distressing business.

1 CDC Minutes, 23-25 JUN 69

2 Health & Works Committee Minutes, 9 AUG 73

3 C&ED Minutes, 24 MAY 73; CDC Minutes, 24-25 MAR 71, 20-21 MAR 73, 21-22 JUN 72

PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

An analysis of the process of planning and the allocation of resources in the Central District Council has to grapple with two apparently contradictory facts. On the one hand the Councillors can hardly be described as docile, and examples abound of successful intervention and amendments made to plans. On the other hand the fact remains that these alterations tended to be peripheral and to leave the main body of the plans intact and indeed unchallenged. The most convincing explanation is that Councillors treated meetings of the Council (especially full Council but also committees) like kgotla meetings; whereas for the officials servicing the Council it was a question of the complex administration of a large district, and this meant a systematic survey, based on explicit criteria, of the development needs and possibilities of the District. What happened then, on the whole, was the acceptance of officials' criteria as a basis for planning, but with the legal power of Councillors to take decisions being used to deal with any anomalous or urgent situation not taken account of.

One advantage which officials had was their superior understanding of a planning system which relied on documents written in English, which was complex, which worked to deadlines, and which - to add to the potential for confusion - changed over the period under review. The introduction of the District Development Committees symbolised the Government's dissatisfaction with the district status quo and a shift towards a new system. Long before the District Development Committee structure was established the Council itself had set up a Five Year Planning system which entailed Five Year Planning Sub-Committees of the main standing committees; furthermore the membership of those committees

included co-opted outsiders as well as Councillors, and in this way resembled the subsequent District Development Committee idea. But the role of these planning sub-committees tended to make the decision-making process even more baffling to many Councillors, and not only those who were not literate in English. A recognition of this was the postponement, on more than one occasion, of discussion on plans or annual estimates from one meeting to the next.¹

Another baffling question concerned the system of plans which had been adopted by the Council. Thus "the plan" was cited repeatedly by the Secretary, in reply to "ward" questions, to explain why a particular facility could not be provided in the near future. Logically, too, the other side of the coin appeared with the invocation of the National Development Plan by officials in support of projects. Less specifically, a request for the provision of a vehicle to deliver materials to assist with Village Development Committee projects was countered by the answer that "there are no funds."² On the other hand,

Arising from questions and queries by some Councillors that certain projects were not included, the Chairman of the Planning Committee explained that the drawing up of a plan was not the final thing. A plan was always subject to revision from time to time to take the latest developments into account.³

And again,

It was explained that having boreholes in the list of priorities did not mean that they would automatically be equipped.⁴

1 E.g. CDC Minutes 13-14 DEC 72; see also ibid., 7-9 OCT 68 where it was complained that Councillors had not had time to study the documents.

2 Ibid., 20-22 JUL 67; F&GP Report APR-JUN 68; H&W Minutes 15-16 NOV 72. CDC Minutes, 14-17 SEP 70

3 Ibid., 23-25 JUN 69

4 H&W Minutes, 26 SEP 72

Councillors might have been forgiven for concluding that plans were a weapon to be deployed tactically. As a corollary it may be added that the increasing formality of district level planning is bound to decrease the degree of latitude permitted to the bureaucracy in decisions on implementation, and pari passu to increase the scope for Councillors' initiatives provided they time their submissions right.

It would be tedious to list all the examples of the rubber-stamping without challenge of significant plans, which committed Councillors for years ahead to a limited number of development projects. A few highlights may suffice. These include a Five-Year Education Plan, District lists of priorities for the provision of village water, the District Development Plan, the DDC's proposals for self-help contributions (percentages), the annual estimates for all major committees and a list of development projects.¹

Rather more interesting are those occasions when Councillors amended the recommendations put before them. In the first place it should be noted that Councillors did not feel inhibited in amending or referring back committee reports in general.² Then there were cases where a point of general concern in principle was made in the form of an amendment to a planning document. Examples are decisions to reduce matimela fees, prune certain estimates, or accept a Central Government suggestion for inclusion in a plan only on certain conditions. Other amendments were in fact endorsements of suggestions made by Council officials. (These last are paralleled by the acceptance of

1 CDC Minutes, 25 SEP 67; H&W Minutes, 20 JUN 68; C&ED Minutes, 23 NOV 72; CDC Minutes, 13-14 DEC 72; H&W Minutes, 25-26 APR 73; C&ED Minutes 14 AUG 73; H&W Minutes, 9 AUG 73; Education Committee Minutes, 7-8 AUG 73.

2 E.g. CDC Minutes 15-16 JUL 68, 18-20 MAR 70, 27-28 JUN 73

the Council Secretary's remarkable initiatives, following a tour of the District, whereby he made suggestions to Council for the improvement of education facilities in a remote village, and negotiated with the Government for the health facilities in another area.)¹

The activities of Councillors acting as the spearhead of pressure from their wards for the allocation of resources are the most interesting, but, in contrast to the large number of questions brought to the forum of Council meetings, the number of successful interventions at the crucial stages of decisions on priorities and planning documents is not large. However individual Councillors managed to obtain concessions such as these: the inclusion of two remote schools in an upgrading programme; a modification to the plans of a foreign donor for a village; the resiting of a borehole; the upgrading of a school and two alterations to water development plans to give higher priority to Councillors' villages. Another category of intervention involved a joint challenge by a number of "outlying" Councillors to allocations for the Independence Day and destitute funds, the result of which was a reallocation away from Serowe.²

The conclusion must be that "backbench" Councillors in particular often missed opportunities of pressing the interest of their constituents through a lack of understanding of the administrative and committee structure of the Council; and that the vacuum left was filled by the Council staff (many of whom, in this context, were expatriate volunteers), who tended to view planning as a technical

1 CDC Minutes, 15-16 JUL 68, 7-9 OCT 68; H&W Minutes, 12-13 DEC 72, 9 AUG 73, 25-26 APR 73, 24 JUL 73; Education Committee Minutes, 17-18 APR 73, 16 JUL 73.

2 C&ED Minutes, 26-27 JUN 68; CDC Minutes, 20-23 FEB 67, 15-17 SEP 71, 21-22 JUN 72, 13-14 DEC 72; H&W Minutes, 12-13 DEC 72; CDC Minutes 7-9 OCT 68, 14-17 SEP 70, 21-22 JUN 72.

matter based on objective and quantifiable criteria. The following quotation from an address to the Council by the Government Town Planner illustrates:

The [Serowe Planning] committee will know best what people require. . . . he had read books about the Batswana, how they lived in the past, what were their needs and how they made their homes. So if the basic requirements are known, e.g. schools, water facilities, houses and the population of the people, it would be very easy to plan. The people would be made to participate in this exercise when planners would merely provide expertise.

A rather more typical attitude was the concern of such staff as Council Advisers to ensure that when there were funds and/or plans for development projects these should go ahead with the minimum of delay; to achieve this objective they were prepared to do battle if necessary with those who held the purse strings (Council Treasurer and Ministry of Finance & Development Planning) in the general interest of the District. Their attitude, not unreasonably, was that, provided they adhered to the rules, it was not their fault if Councillors failed to comprehend exactly what was being done all the time; after all, the Councillors had every opportunity to take initiatives, if they wanted to.

EXTERNAL ASPECTS

Village Development - "Ipelegeng"

On the face of it, the Central District ought to be as fertile territory for the success of self-help as any in the country: overwhelmingly pro-BDP, bound by ties of traditional loyalty to the President, virtually free of Opposition political activity. Yet the absence of the obstacles which are said to hamper self-help in some other districts merely serves to highlight the problems inherent in

the whole idea of self-help. The use of the word Ipelegeng here to connote the voluntary self-help schemes, the Village Development Committee and similar organisations, and the schemes of Food-for-Work, Famine Relief, Drought Relief, etc, while doubtless upsetting the bureaucratic purists (who can readily distinguish between the various schemes and titles), does reflect the very real confusion in the minds of very many Batswana, who thus tend to lump together all kinds of village development project work as "Ipelegeng" (or Boipelego). Early in the Council's history the Chairman (and Chief) testified to this confusion in these words:

The public had not been fully aware of their role nor the implementation of schemes which were intended for them and consequently the principles of 'self-help' were unknown to them.¹

A major reason for this confusion was the failure to appreciate the different schemes which were put forward, some for rations, some totally voluntary, some partly voluntary.²

It is widely recognised that since the demise of the old regimental labour system - which, while undoubtedly authoritarian, did achieve concrete results - there has been something of a vacuum, and the introduction of a democratic successor system is as yet only a partial success.³ The voluntary principle has been undermined by a number of factors. The Central Government's own schemes (already mentioned), which in turn were heavily influenced by foreign aid agencies, are dealt with in a later part of this chapter. But in

1 CDC Minutes, 20-23 FEB 67 (emphasis added). "Chief" should properly read "Tribal Authority."

2 For a discussion of related issues see G. Williams, "Taking the Part of Peasants," in Gutkind & Wallerstein, Political Economy of Contemporary Africa (1976).

3 See Chapter 6 below, especially pp. 282-289

this connexion it has to be emphasised that the recurrence of drought - like Tanzania, Botswana was given "Independence with famine"¹ - is a built-in disturber of voluntary self-help schemes (unless some very different approach were to be adopted towards the problem of famine relief).

The implications of famine relief are far from being the only factors to undermine the voluntary principle, however. An early ministerial speech to the Council introduced the idea of incentive grants for self-help, and later the Council casually endorsed the idea of payment for helping to supply water for a VDC project. In another instance it was decided that three VDCs which had failed to dig trenches for a water reticulation project should pay a financial contribution in lieu of the labour. In other cases wealthy traders made donations which counted as "the community's contribution".² Finally with the systematisation of Ipelegeng (largely by the District Development Committee's planning procedures) the voluntary principle came to mean in practice the "percentage principle" - which comes pretty close to the idea of a village levy, or even a contribution payable by the District Council.

The fundamental weakness of the principle of voluntary self-help was compounded by institutional problems of varying complexity. A reflection of those in the Central District was the appearance of the national Director of Community Development on two occasions three years

1 S. S. Mushi, "Revolution by Evolution: the Tanzanian Road to Socialism," (1974), p. 83

2 CDC Minutes, 5-6 JUL 66, 15-17 SEP 72; H&W Minutes, 17-18 APR 73, 25-26 APR 73; CDC Minutes, 12 DEC 73

apart. The first (in 1968) was to explain the proposal for the establishment of Village Development Committees throughout the District by his Community Development Assistants.¹ However the partial failure of the scheme is testified to by the reappearance of the Community Development Director before the District Council three years later. On this occasion he had to explain such fundamental points as the ex-officio membership of VDCs; their objectives ("to investigate the needs of its own village and recommend to Council what action ought to be taken"); the procedure for dealing with the crucial project form, the possibility of electing a chief (or headman) as chairman (not recommended, because "naturally the people might fear to express their views freely"); the relationship of the Community Development Department to Council and the VDC; the size and elected basis of the VDC; and the problem of the ex officio headman's seat in one area with several headmen.² Clearly some of the points made arose from experience of difficulties; equally the failure to define such fundamental matters in advance betrays a lack of foresight. The upshot was the creation of a large number of VDCs, some of which lapsed, and revival has often proved a more painful and difficult process as a result of previous bitter experience.

In some areas, the Council noted with apparent approval, VDCs assumed the mantle of the traditional administration, for instance in helping to identify destitutes or - illegally - issuing stock sales permits. In other villages the Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) came to perform functions similar to those of the VDC - in one case acting as a court of first instance - and warranting official recognition, to

1 CDC Minutes 20-22 JUL 67. The basic institution of local Development Committee had been mooted by the [Famine] Relief & Rehabilitation Officer for the District, some months previously: C&ED Report OCT 66-FEB 67.

2 CDC Minutes, 18-20 MAR 70

the extent that Councillors could be authorised to organise them.¹

The role of the ex officio members of the VDC frequently gave rise to problems. In the early days when Ipelegeng involved the doling-out of rations (for which the demand was greater than the supply) Councillors took an active interest in the famine relief programme.² As Ipelegeng moved into the truly voluntary self-help phase, Councillors in a number of instances were able to perform a "broker" function: using work already done under Ipelegeng in order to get action on a road, for example; asking Council to complete a self-help project; or promising Ipelegeng work in order to achieve the resiting of a (planned) borehole.³ Headmen on the other hand tended to perform a more negative role - or, more crudely, wield the power of veto. Disputes occurred over the membership of one VDC, where the Headmen told the Councillor (who represented several villages) that the latter was not a member of the VDC. Another, enterprising, Headman proposed that his travelling expenses should be met from VDC funds.⁴ The serious consequences of continuing hostility between Headmen and Councillors was explicitly outlined in 1971 by the retiring acting Paramount Chief and Council Chairman as follows:-

The apparent lack of co-operation between traditional authorities and councillors . . . he said should not be allowed to prevail as it can only bring about stagnation in development.⁵

1 C&ED Minutes 24 MAY 73; CDC Minutes, 11-12 SEP 74; Education Committee Minutes, 26-27 OCT 71, 17-18 APR 73.

2 C&ED Reports, AUG 66 and OCT 66-FEB 67

3 CDC Minutes, 23-25 JUN 67, 15-17 SEP 71

4 Ibid., 15 SEP 69; CDC Agenda, 7-9 OCT 68

5 CDC Minutes, 22 JUN 71

While certain particular causes of failure can be pinpointed, the problem is clearly a complex interaction of many factors. An exceptionally frank analysis by the Council's Development Officer of the 1970 Development Programme brings out the salient features and is worth quoting:

. . . the 1970 programme was beset with several problems which rendered it a failure. Some of these problems were the scarcity of funds, lack of co-operation between institutions concerned, i.e. chief, councillors and Village Development Committees and also failure on the part of the officers and councillors to visit villages earmarked for the programme. . . . in some villages, agreements between Council and Communities were in some cases misinterpreted by Councillors to the people hence delaying progress. . . . the other big obstacle in the development of projects was the lack of communication between Councillors and officers i.e. Councillors were not furnishing officers with the necessary progress reports about their electoral Wards.¹

When it came to suggesting remedies - other than the almost ritual plea for more co-operation and understanding by all concerned - Councillors definitely rejected proposals to compel villagers to participate in development projects but did agree to remove building materials contributed by the Council if no progress was visible after six months.²

In concluding consideration of Ipelegeng it will have been noted that the difficulties experienced in the Central District³ with mobilizing the people have been considerable despite the absence of significant Opposition party activity at the local level so frequently blamed by BDP spokesmen in other areas for lack of progress, or of the traditional rearguard action fought by the Paramount Chiefs elsewhere.

1 CDC Minutes, 20-21 MAR 73

2 Ibid., 20-22 JUL 67; Education Minutes, 12 OCT 73

3 For a few examples of VDCs in difficulties see BDN, 9 FEB 67, 13 FEB 67, 11 NOV 69, 11 FEB 71; for some examples of more successful VDCs see BDN, 21 SEP 67, 21 JAN 69, 5 MAY 70, 5 FEB 73

The role of Councillors

Central District Councillors were not short of advice on how to perform their functions. An instance is the address by the Minister of Local Government & Lands to the inaugural meeting of the Second Session, in which the Minister emphasised the need for Councillors to do the best for their constituents, familiarise themselves with the system, especially finance - "Too often [Councillors] blindly accept estimates drawn up by their staff and fail to realise the implications of, or reasons for, what they approve" - and report back after every Council meeting to the electorate. The staff were not there to make policy but to feed information to the Councillors.¹ Certainly the role of Councillors severally as channels of communications was well understood in theory. The usual bringing of grievances to Council was balanced by examples of Councillors being told to go and explain policy or decisions to the people, e.g. arrangements for a mobile clinic, or being given an investigatory role.² Earlier mention has been made of Councillors' role as compilers of lists of destitutes, as organisers of PTAs, VDCs etc. Yet there remains a grey area requiring proper definition - witness the reprimand handed out to one Councillor for interfering in school administration.³ Not least of the problems was the overlapping of the communication function between the Councillors and the officials, notably the Council Secretary and Chairman - both of whose tours of the District tended to become increasingly important vehicles for suggesting action on problems which the Councillors might have raised.⁴

1 CDC Minutes, 19 NOV 69

2 H&W Minutes, 25-26 APR 73; CDC Minutes 22 JUN 71; 27-28 SEP 72; Education Committee Minutes 12-14 JUL 73, Licensing Committee Minutes 27 JUL 73

3 CDC Minutes, 15-17 SEP 71

4 See chapter 6 for further discussion.

A number of individual Councillors performed a visible role of "broker" e.g. in achieving the switching of priorities between different schools in the same ward or the completion of a project.¹

As a group however, Councillors were sometimes frustrated,² or became rather trapped by procedure. A good instance was the establishment by a sub-committee of an ad-hoc sub-sub-committee to examine Councillors' proposed projects; this ad-hoc committee had a membership of five, only one of whom was an elected Councillor!³ Councillors tended therefore to react in their frustration with attacks on the officials of the Council or occasionally by demanding the reference-back of a committee report. Those who bore the brunt of this were increasingly the Council Secretary (whose position has been discussed above) and the Education Secretary, whose cause célèbre is the subject of examination later. But clearly Councillors as a body did not fully realise their own strength, even after several years' experience of the new system.

The Traditional Administration⁴

Relations between the Central District Council and the traditional authorities of the Bangwato are none too easy to characterise. On the one hand the District is the heartland of BDP support and the degree of overlap in personnel between the two systems is impressive. On the other hand Gillett has suggested that considerable tensions and rivalries bubble away beneath the surface and that it is only the unique position of Sir Seretse Khama in commanding loyalty that preserves the façade

1 Education Committee Minutes, 17-18 APR 73; CDC Minutes 14-17 SEP 70. In addition see above, pp. 171 and 176.

2 E.g. in the unnecessarily protracted attempt to get a hospital visiting committee established.

3 Planning Sub-Committee of C&ED Minutes, 29 JUN 67

4 The classic study of the Bangwato is I. Schapera, "The Ngwato of the Bechuanaland Protectorate" in Fortes & Evans-Pritchard (Eds.) African Political Systems (1940)

of unity.¹ The resolution of the apparent paradox lies in two distinctions, one of level and one of time, as well as the necessity of weighing up particular cases of conflict or co-operation (and integration).

Taking first the theme of harmony, "the foundations laid by the Bamangwato Tribal Administration and its establishment of a Tribal Council and an Executive Committee" were the subject of testimony by the Minister of Local Government at the Council's inaugural meeting.² As inheritor of the Tribal Administration, moreover, Council inherited most of its employees. For the First Session the Chief of the Bangwato was ex officio Chairman of the Council (and was elected Chairman at the beginning of Session II), and, more significantly, the aristocratic members of Council (both elected and nominated) were elected to very nearly one-third of the committee seats available at the first elections in 1966 (nine out of twenty-eight) - a high degree of over-representation. Further examples of the close relationship are Council's agreement to pay the Chief's expenses incurred on a trip to Israel and its suggestion that the Chief have a veto on licensing applications. In turn the Chief, faced with a Government request for the cession of Bangwato land to the state, requested that Government spokesman come and explain the proposals to the District Council.³ The force of custom was demonstrated, too, by the passage of a motion asking that the custom of bogadi (dowry) be officially

1 S. Gillett, "The Survival of Chieftaincy in Botswana," African Affairs, LXXII, 287 (1973)

2 CDC Minutes, 5-6 JUL 66

3 Staff Committee Report, JUL-AUG 66; F&GP Report APR-JUN 68; C&ED Report OCT 66-FEB 67; CDC Minutes, 26 JUN 69, BDN 26 JUN 69

reintroduced into Gamangwato.¹ The voting on that occasion however was 15-12 in favour, which indicates the divisions within Councillors' ranks concerning "traditionalism".

All was not sweetness and light however, particularly when it was the village Headmen and the intermediate level of the traditional administration that was at issue. In this latter category are to be found the large number of Khama relatives, some of whom were keen to jockey for position. The large number of questions concerning custom and the whole traditional system which cropped up during Session I of the Central District Council reflects the problem of demarcation which preoccupied many Councillors in the early days of the Council. Specific problems of communication arose, such as who was to tell the people about matimela, or inform the Bangwato kgotla of District Council decisions or collect/approve the lists of village destitutes. Moreover, overt criticism of the aristocracy was expressed in the Council chamber, necessitating an assurance by the Acting Chief that traditional appointments were made on merit and were not restricted to the ruling Sekgoma family.²

As the pull of the Bangwato aristocracy fell away so did their share of elective positions.³ Increasingly the leadership of the Council fell into the hands of the "new men", symbolised by the election as Council Chairman of Mr Colin Blackbeard, one of the District's wealthiest traders (and later MP for Serowe North) in 1971. The relative eclipse of the traditional authorities was caused in part

1 CDC Minutes, 7-9 OCT 68

2 Ibid., 20-22 JUL 67, 9 DEC 68; C&ED Minutes, 24 MAY 73; CDC Minutes 7-9 OCT 68

3 See pp. 93-96 above

by the illness of the original acting Chief, the resignation of his successor, and prolonged discussions about the future of the Bangwato chieftainship. There was no-one remotely resembling a Chief Bathoen in the traditional system of the Bangwato, since the original Chief, thanks to the British Government during Protectorate days, inadvertently had his way paved to becoming Prime Minister Seretse Khama.¹

Relations with the Central Government

The Central District received its fair share of VIP visits from Ministers and senior civil servants. The purpose of such visits varied, from the purely ceremonial to the admonitory. The Minister of Local Government & Lands, for instance, in an address criticised the "tendency among a number of councils to treat the meeting of Council as a debating ground for every imaginable topic irrespective of whether such topic has any connection with the functions of the Council;"² while the Permanent Secretary in the same Ministry criticised unauthorised virement and warned of closer Government scrutiny in the future. Other official visitors, from other ministries, used the Council as a sounding board for reactions to planned policy innovations such as wildlife preservation schemes.³ Sometimes these occasions were purely formal and boring, but most of them were seized with alacrity by Councillors as an occasion to question the Man from the Ministry, sometimes to the extent of embarrassment.⁴ In a special category are the

1 "The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, expressed regrets at addressing Council without a jacket. . . . He said how things had changed. The last time he had addressed the then Tribal Council on voting procedure his interpreter had been Mr Seretse Khama. " CDC Minutes 7-9 OCT 68

2 Ibid., 20-23 FEB 67

3 CDC Minutes, 27-28 SEP 72, 21 MAY 70

4 See p. 185 below for an example.

most ceremonious of all visits, but also the occasions for the most serious business, namely the special Presidential "cession sessions", at which the Council was asked to approve the ceding of land and mineral rights to the Government.¹

Less spectacular was the correspondance between the Ministry and the Council Secretary. At the level of officials, this was concerned mostly with the form of the minutes or clarifying obscure points. But it is worth gently exploding the myth that Mr E. M. K. Kgabo, Minister of Local Government & Lands for most of the period under review, was interested solely in his home district, the Kweneng, an idea which was connected with the view that he was busily securing his political base there.² In fact Kgabo took a close interest in a number of issues concerning the Central District, sending memos to his officials especially on questions concerning matimela and the traditional system in general. In particular he opposed the proposal to use matimela for traditional ceremonies, and was suspicious of attempts by the Bangwato traditional authorities to cling to their privileges.³

In addition to pressures concerning matimela regulations, the Government made suggestions for the contents of the Council's input to the District Plan, while other Government representations concerned an English-medium school and school area committees, the last two

1 CDC Minutes 11 MAR 67 and 26 JUN 69; BDN, 14 MAR 67

2 For politics in the Kweneng, see Vengroff, op. cit. (Especially Ch. V)

3 Correspondence between Permanent Secretary, MIG&L and CDC Secretary, 21 AUG 67 and 13 SEP 67; F&GP Minutes 25 MAY 67; "The decision (Serowe kgotla's) . . . to refer the question of the ownership of matimela to the traditional authorities clearly aims at flouting the powers of the district council, which I am not prepared to tolerate" (18/8/67 Note from Minister to Principal); note of 18/1/72 re costs of upkeep of borehole involving ex-Chief Sekgoma Khama. The Minister's interest in these matters in the Central District was reportedly the result of representations from a Cabinet colleague from Gamangwato. In any case he was generally keen on curbing the powers of the aristocracy.

examples givingrise to a certain amount of friction as Councillors felt they were being dictated to.¹

When the Central District Council raised its voice in protest - which it did not infrequently - the complaints were usually attributable to one or other of two basic causes, finance or a lack of communication. The Treasurer's complaint about the Government's forcing the Council to deplete its reserves up to the point of crisis, while understandable, was an indication that the Council was being forced into a more developmental, active role but also being forced to submit its plans for close Government scrutiny. Later the Council protested about the problems caused by cuts in expenditure imposed on them by a Government which also refused to grant sufficient "pump priming" funds for the establishment of the matimela system it ostensibly prized so highly.² In the financial field it is interesting to note that the Central District was less disposed to swallow its medicine than was the "problem" Southern District.

In more general terms the Central District's complaints included the common one of the Government's tardiness in replying to communications, and its failure to consult the Council on the question of the extension of the bounds of Selebi-Phikwe at the expense of the Central District. On one occasion indeed the Council protested at a press release issued by the Government and demanded a public retraction.³

Apart from sporadic friction in general between the Central District Council and the Government, there were three particular areas

1 H&W Minutes, 9 AUG 73; CDC Minutes, 22 JUN 71; Education Committee Report, MAY-JUN 68

2 CDC Minutes, 15-17 SEP 71; Education Committee Minutes, 7-8 AUG 73; CDC Minutes 20-21 MAR 73

3 Education Committee Report, MAY-JUN 68; H&W Minutes, 24 JUL 73; CDC Minutes, 22 JUN 71, 13-14 DEC 72, 23-25 JUN 69

of activity which caused the greatest amount of dissatisfaction, none of them directly/exclusively the responsibility of the "parent" Ministry. As in the other two Districts, the biggest single sphere of discontent was water. Examples of failure on the part of the Department of Water Affairs to come up to expectations or even to reply to letters are legion, but it added insult to injury when the Minister of Commerce, Industry & Water Affairs, on a VIP visit, declared that he would not deal with questions concerning water as the official from the Department of Water Affairs was absent. Small wonder that Councillors "expressed misgivings" at the ability of the Water Affairs Department to cope with a new borehole maintenance scheme, and later recorded their view of the "failure of the Department of Water Affairs to cope with the maintenance of the existing boreholes in the District." The refusal of the Geological Survey Department to drill for water as requested, moreover, while perhaps technically justified, caused further bitterness, which might have been avoidable by good public relations.¹

Next to water - and connected causally if not organisationally - the greatest cause for criticism of the Government concerned the Food-for-Work or Famine Relief or Drought Relief programmes. It has already been seen how fragile the voluntary principle of self-help could be, and how much effort was required to try and put across the distinction between self-help and food-for-work. The following minute is worth quoting since it brings out the criticisms of the whole Food-for-Work idea by the District's representatives after six years experience:

World Food Programme Project

The Secretary told Council that the question of the resumption of Food-for-Work Programme was discussed at

1 CDC Minutes, 21 MAY 70, 7-9 OCT 68, 20 DEC 71, 15-17 SEP 71

length (at the National Conference of District Development committees). That fears were expressed from all quarters by those who have experienced something bitter about food contribution toward VDC projects.

The Secretary went on to say that the conference members, having given several reasons against the reintroduction of the food-for-work programme, expressed themselves in favour of a food programme to relieve the destitutes. The World Food Programme officer stated that the WFP could not provide food on the foregoing terms.

There was diversity of opinion among Council members. Some welcomed the programme and others spoke against it recalling its aftermath once it was discontinued, that it would have a serious effect on all future attempts to institute a genuine self-help development programme. The matter was put to vote. 7 were in favour and 15 were against it, and it was

RESOLVED

To endorse the decision of the National Conference that Food-for-Work Programme should not be reintroduced.¹

The Councillors were understandably annoyed when the Government introduced the scheme six months later.

Members said that they were inclined to believe that the food-for-work programme would disturb the Village Development Committees as the people who are involved in the programme are the very same people who are used by the Village Development Committee.

The Development Officer reiterated . . . that this programme came suddenly from Government and that was why Councillors and Village Development Committees had not been informed at the initial stage to what extent they would be involved in the matter.²

Subsequently Councillors testified to having had their fears confirmed:-

. . . during the introduction of the drought relief programme village development committees and councillors were never consulted. CDAs and teachers were the only people who were responsible for the organisation of the people and the distribution of food. This meant therefore that Councillors would have difficulties in trying to mobilise people

Council members came to the conclusion that as 1974 was the year of consultation they were hopeful that the Ministry would

1 CDC Minutes, 13-14 DEC 72

2 Ibid., 3-5 OCT 73

consult council and not issue directives whenever they have some plans to do something.¹

These hopes were dashed however with the further major disruption of a crash programme of public works called the Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP), which aimed to create a sizeable and visible difference in rural infrastructure (transport, education and health especially) during the run-up to the 1974 election. However Councillors in the Central District on the whole reacted favourably, or were neutral, since the benefits of the scheme were tangible and were worth paying the price of the lack of consultation which had so perturbed Councillors in the case of the Food-for-Work programme.

Members of Parliament²

Although Members of Parliament made up the bulk of the Central District Preparatory Commission, and although the Secretary and Chairman of the Central District Council (in Session II) were subsequently elected to the National Assembly, the links between MPs and the District Council were weak.³ Backbench MPs rarely attended meetings of the Council⁴ although ministers, and the President himself, did occasionally attend. One MP, B. Steinberg, who represented Boteti, did sit on a Council sub-committee for a time.⁵ But on the whole MPs neither visited the Council offices nor wrote to the Council with problems.

The notable exception to this rule was M. P. K. Nwako, who developed a very close relationship with the Councillor for Palapye, both of whom collaborated on a series of issues.⁶ A prime example of

1 CDC Minutes 12 DEC 73

2 Chapter 9 is devoted to a fuller study of MPs. This section is concerned with MPs seen from the perspective of the District Council.

3 See the Tordoff Report (op. cit.), p. 57

4 Ibid; CDC Minutes, 18-19 MAR 68

5 Minutes of Five Year Planning Sub-Committee; C&ED, 14 APR 67

6 See BDN, 8 SEP 69, 15 SEP 69

Nwako's activity was the Lerala clinic case. Here the MP persuaded a local businessman to make a sizeable donation towards the cost of a local clinic and this donation, it was subsequently agreed at the Councillor's instigation, counted as the Community's contribution in terms of self-help percentages. Another MP who worked closely with one of his Councillors to urge the reticulation of water to a village school was unsuccessful when it was pointed out that the school was next door to his store.¹ Mostly MPs raised questions in the National Assembly with no reference to the Council and these were occasionally brought up in the Council.² In one instance the MP for Mahalapye, who had attended a Council meeting, criticised the Council Secretary's handling of business and was formally rebuked by the Council for interference.³

It is not being argued that MPs were inactive, but rather that their activities tended to by-pass the Council. In its turn the Council (usually prodded by the Secretary) only very intermittently decided to refer matters to MPs to take up.⁴ Most of the time the two institutions were in watertight compartments.

SPECIAL ISSUES

The Education Secretary

The rise and fall of the first Education Secretary of the Central District warrants special mention on various counts: firstly because of the importance of the position (the CDC being the biggest employer of teachers in the country), secondly because of the inordinate amount

1 H&W Minutes, 15-16 NOV 72, 25-26 APR 73, 15-16 NOV 72

2 E.g. CDC Minutes, 22 JUN 71 and 13-14 DEC 72

3 Ibid., 15-16 JUL 68. See also pp. 384-385 below.

4 E.g. F&GP Report, SEP 66-FEB 67; Education Committee Minutes, 17-18 APR 73; CDC Minutes 3-5 OCT 73

of attention given to the question by Councillors and others, and lastly but by no means least because of the light it sheds on the workings of the local government system in general.

As soon as the recommended appointment as Education Secretary of the former Tribal Administration Assistant Education Secretary was made known it was under fire, and the recommendation adopted only after a lengthy session in camera, while an emergency motion laying down that the holder of the post of Education Secretary should hold a professional certificate in teaching was tabled - but ruled out of order - soon afterwards.¹ Complaints followed concerning the transfer of teachers,² delays of up to six months in paying teachers, that the Education Secretary had by-passed the Finance Committee etc. The criticisms were of arrogance, arbitrariness, insensitivity and maladministration, not least with regard to women teachers. However despite the manifest discontent amongst Councillors it was held that the individual concerned could not be dismissed, and instead a seasoned trouble-shooter was sent by the Central Government to investigate. As a result of his confidential report, the post of Chief Education Secretary was created: i.e. relative demotion. The irony of the situation was that Council were unable to make a suitable appointment and this made the Education Secretary - much to the annoyance of Councillors - Acting Chief Education Secretary, and as a last straw were forced to pay him an acting allowance. However eventually the officer concerned took the hint and a golden handshake and resigned. But the whole affair took a total of seven years - which underlines the weakness of

1 CDC Minutes, 12 SEP 66, 20-22 FEB 67

2 Education Committee Report, MAY-JUN 68; see also Tordoff Report, op. cit., pp. 23-25

Councillors in exercising authority over senior staff. It also illustrates weakness in the system in dividing responsibility for education between two officials (the other being the Education Officer, a field officer of the Ministry of Education).¹

Decentralisation and the Mahalapye question

The Central District, by virtue of its size, has been the subject of recurrent, and uniformly unsuccessful, proposals to break it up or, more commonly, to decentralise it by creating Subordinate District Councils or Area Councils. The idea, first accepted by the Central District Preparatory Commission, was accepted in principle by the Council,² but nothing happened. The Tordoff Commission and the later Chambers and Feldman mission recommended that the matter be reactivated³ and the District Development Committee then considered the question at great length.⁴ The main visible result was the decision to build up one of the northern villages as an Area administrative headquarters.⁵

The significant fact is that there was no pressure coming from Councillors for the creation of subordinate district councils: instead, pressure for decentralisation came in other ways. Examples are the Agricultural Show (an annual event in Serowe), which some Councillors wanted held in subordinate areas as well as or instead of the centralised show. Similarly there was successful pressure to divide up the cake for the annual Independence celebrations into the twelve parliamentary constituencies. A further reallocation was made of the funds

1 CDC Minutes, 22 JUN 71, 22-23 MAR 72, 3-5 OCT 73

2 On a motion proposed and seconded by the Councillors for Mahalapye. CDC Minutes 20-23 FEB 67

3 The Tordoff Report, *op. cit.*, pp 21-23 & Appendix III; Chambers & Feldman, Report on Rural Development (1973), pp 217-220

4 Central DDC Minutes, 12 JUN 73

5 F&GP Minutes, 19 JUN 73

for the relief of destitution.¹ The most obvious explanation is that Councillors were more interested in decentralisation of patronage than of responsibility.

This squares with the institutional change which aroused the greatest interest in Councillors, namely the creation of the Subordinate Tribal Land Boards. When the novel Land Board system was creaking audibly, Councillors countered the proposal of the Ngwato Land Board that the introduction of subordinate tribal land boards should be delayed with a resolution urging that preparations for their establishment be expedited;² many Councillors were subsequently elected to the Subordinate Tribal Land Boards, which thus considerably increased their power and prestige.

The reason for the resistance to the break up of the administrative unity of the District was fundamentally political.³ The nuclear ("true") Bangwato had over a long period created an empire⁴ in which they were a small minority, but this process was so successful that most inhabitants of the Central District referred to themselves as Bangwato and were proud to do so, since the Bangwato are by far the largest clan, if not the most senior in historical terms in Botswana. But this much-prized unity - the basis for BDP power as well as that of the traditional authorities - was potentially threatened by the large linguistic minority of Kalangas in the north of the District; it is axiomatic that any form of elected subordinate council system would

1 C&ED Report, OCT 66-FEB 67; CDC Minutes, 14-17 SEP 68, 21-22 JUN 72

2 Ibid., 14-17 SEP 70

3 "The members were alerted as to the sensitivity of the issue involved and that it should not be discussed outside of the meeting." Central DDC Minutes, 12 JUN 73

4 See Schapera, "The Ngwato of the Bechuanaland Protectorate," op. cit.

create a Kalanga-speaking sub-council. And there is an underlying fear amongst many Setswana-speaking Bangwato that the Kalangas, given "home rule" in the northern area (known as Bokalaka) might start behaving politically like the Kalangas of the North East District and Francistown, both strongholds of the BPP. Hence the reluctance to contemplate tampering with the existing system.

Paradoxically, perhaps, the most persistent demands for decentralisation have come, however, not from the Bokalaka but from Mahalapye. The proposal - mooted at a public meeting¹ - that it might form a township on its own (like Selebi-Phikwe) led to a strong reaction in the Council, which is worth quoting fully:

The Chairman said that he had recently attended a meeting at Mahalapye where a desire that Mahalapye should become a township authority was expressed, but his own feeling was that if the idea of a township authority was a good one, Serowe should be the first town in the Central District to be declared a township authority.

He also said that he would shortly be touring the Central District as TRIBAL AUTHORITY. . . .

Points raised by members

(ii) That it was not the feeling of the majority of the people of Mahalapye that the town should be separated administratively from the entire District. The feeling of others who were at the meeting was that a township authority should be introduced in Serowe first as was the practice with all new orders of things. Others had intimated that they would return to Serowe, from where they had originally come, if Mahalapye became a township authority.

(iii) Councillors from places within the Mahalapye sub-district area mentioned that if Mahalapye became a township authority, they would request the Government to be excluded from the township.

(iv) That although the idea may be a good one, it was still early for its implementation.

(v) That Mahalapye did not raise enough revenue to make it self-sufficient.

(vi) That Serowe could neither be a township authority as many surrounding smaller villages depended on it for revenue.²

1 BDN, 2 MAR 71

2 CDC Minutes, 24-25 MAR 71

In another respect Mahalapye played a lone if not maverick role. This was the celebrated case of the Mahalapye Community Centre¹ (a building of interest to architects as an object lesson of the pitfalls of amateur architecture), which was conceived on a grand scale and proceeded with until there were difficulties both structural and financial. At this point the matter came to the Council in the form of an application for funds. A certain amount was forthcoming but the Ministry expressed disapproval of any further grant and successful recourse was made to foreign aid sources, notably the US Embassy.² Now the building stands as a monument, but also the possible nucleus of any future Subordinate District Council or Town Council administration. More is said in Chapter 6 about the factors behind the politics of Mahalapye, which are more complex than in most parts of the District.³ In conclusion it should be recorded that Mahalapye's two Councillors acted together in sponsoring motions more frequently than Councillors of any other constituency, but were disproportionately unsuccessful in these joint initiatives. This may indicate a certain degree of anti-Mahalapye backlash, but it did not carry over to committee elections, where Mahalapye Councillors achieved a growing prominence.

THE CENTRAL DISTRICT AS POLITICAL ARENA

The Ethnic Factor

There is only one recognised clan within the District - the Bangwato - but there are three main linguistic minorities.⁴ The Kalangas have already been mentioned, but despite the alleged sensitivity of the "Kalanga issue" - or, just possibly, because of it - there was no

1 For an early report see BDN, 2 MAY 69

2 CDC Minutes, 24-25 MAR 71, 15-17 SEP 71

3 Pp. 306-308

4 In the sense of first language: many can speak Setswana, the country's lingua franca. See also Schapera, op. cit.

discussion whatsoever of the Kalangas as a group nor of the Kalanga language.¹ The question of the support for opposition parties, which was definitely greater in Kalanga-speaking areas in the northern part of the District, is examined below. A difficulty inherent in examining the question however is the lack of data on the mother tongue of the people of the District, or indeed any other part of the country.

Likewise Europeans were not treated as a group. Occasionally remarks were made about "big" traders and farmers who must have been white and in one instance Council rejected a plea for recognition of a private school on a (white-owned) farm, while accepting a similar plea from a village private school.² But compared with the North East where there was frequent criticism of white farmers, the Tuli Block farmers were virtually ignored (in the Council, though not in Parliament). Indeed a number of Europeans played a significant part in the Council, two serving as Councillors and several others (the second Speaker of the National Assembly, the Rev A. A. F. Lock, MP; B. Steinberg, MP; and Patrick van Rensburg, the internationally known educationalist) served on Council committees by coöption. The victory of the fluent Setswana-speaking Councillor Blackbeard in the election³ to the Chairmanship of the Council could also be seen as a triumph for Botswana's non-racial policy.

The policy on the Basarwa (Bushmen)⁴ was less liberal: indeed the question of Tswana attitudes to the Basarwa is the Achilles heel of

1 The only partial exception was a query of the spelling of Tutume/Totome, and it was decided to use the latter (Setswana) version. CDC Minutes 22-25 MAR 72.

2 Ibid., 20-23 FEB 67; Education Committee Minutes, 10-14 JUL 73

3 He defeated one of the elected Councillors for Serowe.

4 Botswana's Basarwa have been a magnet for anthropological researchers. Prescribed reading for those interested in the subject ought to be A. M. Merriweather, Desert Doctor (1969), p. 80.

Botswana's non-racialism. Thus a motion was tabled: "that Bushmen whose theft of livestock is increasing should be removed and brought home."¹ Councillors were divided on the issue, some maintaining that the allegation was too sweeping or could be dealt with through the courts; those in favour of the motion

said that Bushmen were thieves because they had nothing to do as they were no longer owned and did not plough nor owned cattle. They also pointed out that they could be removed as they were illegal settlers as they did not have the Chief's permission to occupy the land they do.

The motion was finally referred to the Chief (by 22 votes to 2)² and the matter lapsed.

Although the Bangwato clan clearly predominates in the Central District some of the more traditionalist elements objected to the fact that, whereas the Bakwena, Bakgatla, and Bangwaketse gave their names to their District Councils, this was not the case in Central District. Accordingly a motion was proposed to change the name of the Council to Bamangwato District Council but was defeated 3-25, one Councillor remarking that the Bangwato should be "above tribal divisions."³

Nevertheless when it came to the privilege of hunting in Gamangwato, Councillors expressed a strong determination to reserve those rights to members of the clan and opposed the suggestion that the Chief could allow dispensation to non-clansmen.⁴ When it came to rights over land (including hunting) the traditional clan system holds very firm!

1 CDC Agenda 7 OCT 68; amended to read "to Serowe" instead of "home" when introduced.

2 CDC Minutes, 7-9 OCT 68

3 Ibid., 20-23 FEB 67. Motion proposed by an aristocratic nominated Councillor and seconded by the Councillor for Palapye.

4 CDC Minutes, 22 JUN 71, 18-20 MAR 70. The known fact of discretionary exceptions did not alter clansmen's reluctance to lose their privileges in their own territory.

Elections

That the Central District is a stronghold of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party there can be no doubt. In Parliamentary General Elections it has held every one of the twelve seats with ease. The size of the BDP's election triumph is shown in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1

BDP: GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS: CENTRAL DISTRICT (12 constituencies)

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
Seats held	12	12	12
Unopposed	-	2	2
Share of vote in contested seats	89.9%	89.7%	93.4%
Smallest majority	23.1%*	40.3%*	53.6%**

* Tonota ** Sebinas & Gweta

The Opposition challenge has steadily faded, the only interest concerning the party label of the unsuccessful candidates. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate.

TABLE 4.2

NUMBER OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATES IN GENERAL ELECTIONS: CENTRAL DISTRICT

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BIP	11	6	3
BNF	-	7	2
BPP	11	5	4
Ind.	-	-	1
<u>Total</u>	22	18	10

TABLE 4.3

OPPOSITION PARTIES' SHARE OF VOTES IN GENERAL ELECTIONS: CENTRAL DISTRICT
(Share of vote in seats contested by respective party in brackets)

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BIP	3.1%(3.4%)	2.1%(3.3%)	2.1%(5.1%)
BNF	-	2.8%(4.6%)	0.3%(1.2%)
BPP	7.0%(7.8%)	5.4%(11.6%)	3.8%(15.0%)
Ind	-	-	0.5%(4.4%)
<u>Total</u>	10.1%	10.3%	6.7%

The District Council elections tell the same story. Tables 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 show the position (32 Council seats at stake).

TABLE 4.4

BDP: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION RESULTS: CENTRAL DISTRICT

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
Candidates nominated	32	32	32
Seats won	31	31	32
Unopposed	15	19	22
Share of vote in contested seats	82.3%	83.3%	87.5%
Smallest BDP majority	13.0%*	5.2%*	22.5%**

* Sebina ** Mathangwane

TABLE 4.5

NUMBER OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATES IN CENTRAL DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS
(Seats won in brackets)

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BIP	9(0)	3(0)	4(0)
BNF	1(0)	10(0)	0(-)
BPP	7(1)	4(1)	6(0)
Ind.	2(0)	0(-)	0(-)
<u>Total</u>	19(1)	17(1)	10(0)

TABLE 4.6

OPPOSITION PARTIES'
PERCENTAGE SHARE OF POLL IN CENTRAL DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS
(Share in seats contested by respective parties in brackets)

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BIP	6.0 (9.6)	2.2 (6.8)	4.2 (7.7)
BNF	1.1 (30.8)	6.1 (9.1)	-
BPP	9.8 (30.0)	8.4 (32.8)	8.2 (18.4)
Ind.	0.8 (5.4)	-	-
<u>Total</u>	17.7	16.7	12.4

The question of a Kalanga anti-BDP vote has been raised. The tables which follow give the share of the poll gained by the Democratic Party in the ten constituencies contested in 1965 and 1969 and the

eight Polling Districts which were contested in all three General Elections.¹ The constituencies or Polling Districts with a Kalanga-speaking majority (or at least a very substantial section of the populace) are shown above the line; the lists follow the normal Botswana order, which is roughly from north to south. The "solid" Setswana-speaking constituencies show a very high degree of support for the BDP (around 90%), much higher than the Kalanga-speaking ones. Another significant point is the constituencies which swung away from the BDP in 1969. This was the year when all BDP-held constituencies outside the Central District bar one showed a negative swing, whereas most constituencies in the Central District (and also those held by the BPP) swung towards the Government.

TABLE 4.7

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES CONTESTED IN 1965 AND 1969:
CENTRAL DISTRICT: BDP SHARE OF THE POLL (percentage)

<u>Constituency</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>Change from '65</u>
Sebinas & Gweta	69.7	65.7	- 4.0
Nkange	87.8	68.2	-19.6
Tonota	60.9	67.1	+ 6.2

Mmadinare	95.7	96.5	+ 0.8
Bobirwa	98.1	95.5	- 2.6
Serowe South	96.6	98.6	+ 2.0
Tswapong North	87.1	92.8	+ 5.7
Tswapong South	94.7	96.4	+ 1.7
Shoshong	95.4	95.9	+ 0.5
Mahalapye	92.6	94.8	+ 2.2

1 The Parliamentary Constituency boundaries were changed in 1972 making accurate comparisons impossible.

TABLE 4.8

POLLING DISTRICTS CONTESTED IN ALL THREE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS:
CENTRAL DISTRICT: BDP SHARE OF THE POLL (percentage)

<u>Polling District</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>Change</u> <u>from '66</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>Change</u> <u>from '69</u>	<u>Change</u> <u>from '66</u>
Sebina	56.5	49.3*	- 7.2	72.7	+23.4	+16.2
Nkange	76.1	67.4	- 8.7	76.8	+ 9.4	+ 0.7
Totome	78.4	67.5	-10.9	84.1	+16.6	+ 5.7
Mathangwane	23.1	33.0	+ 9.9	61.2**	+28.2	+38.1
Tonota West	71.9	84.5	+12.6	82.7	- 1.8	+10.8

Shoshong	89.5	91.5	+ 2.0	91.9	+ 0.4	+ 2.4
Mahalapye North	90.6	96.1	+ 5.5	94.7	- 1.4	+ 4.1
Mahalapye South	91.2	92.8	+ 1.6	94.3	+ 1.5	+ 3.1

* Held by BDP in three-cornered contest

** BDP gain from BPP

The evidence suggests that there was an anti-BDP swing in the far north of the District in 1969, in common with most of Botswana outside Gamangwato; but that this ground was more than recovered in the 1974 local government poll.

By-elections (one Parliamentary and six Council) during the period 1965-1974 showed no surprises in electoral behaviour, the BDP winning all seven contests with ease and in several cases unopposed. The biggest upset came in a Council by-election in 1967 in Mathangwane. This was the People's Party's only seat but went uncontested to the BDP.¹ The BPP won the seat back in the 1969 election, only to lose it in 1974 (on the lowest turnout in the District).

1 The matter was the subject of a strong protest by the BPP MP for Tati West, who wrote to the Ministry concerned complaining about the administrative handling of nominations. The Ministry in an internal communication admitted that irregularities might be held to have occurred and it was suggested that legal action might be taken. The matter was not however pursued to that extent. Ministry of Local Government & Lands, By-elections file.

Administrative irregularities also occurred over the Shoshong¹ by-election but on this occasion the Ministry felt that the matter was so grave that the by-election had to be held all over again, and even the second time round all was not done according to the book.² A more serious case arose from the conviction of a Councillor on a charge of stock theft.³ The Councillor was suspended for a time from the Council, then resumed his seat, only to be dropped by the BDP at the 1969 elections. In another case a Councillor was debarred for not submitting any election expenses but subsequently readmitted.

In the light of the widely held view that the BDP as an electoral machine is efficient - its proud boast is that it has never lost a deposit - it is interesting to note that on two occasions no valid nominations were received for by-elections (Sefophe and Tonota East) and a second nomination day had to be notified.⁴ Had an opposition party been on its toes it could have gained a walkover, even in the Domkrag heartland.

Parties and Policies

With one minor exception one does not find in the Central District any examples of party-initiated policy discussions or questions (the exception being the Mahalapye-based national Vice-President of the BNF, Dr K. Koma, who was inter alia spokesman of the Botswana Small Traders'

1 BDN, 25 AUG 71

2 But the embarrassment of having to hold a third by-election (in a safe BDP seat, where the opposition came from the Independence Party) was too great and the minor irregularity ignored.

3 A fine was imposed with the option of a prison sentence, the terms of which would have led to the seat's being declared vacant: a Ministry of Local Government & Lands official suggested this to the Attorney-General but his reply was in the negative, on the grounds that the gaol sentence was not actually served. MLG&L, By-election file.

4 Ibid.

Union and proposed a ban on the use of free transport by big traders to bring people in to their stores).¹ So the two topics are really quite separate.

The question of party membership came up in two ways. In 1970 the lone People's Party Councillor complained at the partisan bias of elections to committees (i.e. his exclusion for the second time at the annual round of committee elections). An attempt was made eighteen months later to unseat him from the Council on the grounds of a period of non-attendance but the Chairman ruled against this on the grounds that he had sent his apologies to the Chairman on each occasion.² Later in 1972 he was co-opted to one committee and in the annual committee elections in October 1973 was elected for the first time to serve on a Council committee. To put the matter in perspective, however, it should be recorded that the BPP Councillor was not the only one to fail to gain a seat on any committee, while other Councillors served on more than one.

The other context in which political parties were invoked was the Secretary's conception of the Councillors as party representatives, and the implication that the party should be the source of guidance on policy and make provision for such facilities as offices if Councillors wanted them.³ For instance the following appeared on the Agenda of an early meeting of the Council:-

Question 14 What is the function of the Councillor in his constituency? Cllr. Mrs. Kaang

1 CDC Minutes, 22-23 MAR 72

2 Ibid., 14-17 SEP 70, 22-23 MAR 72

3 Mr Seretse was unusual in going out of his way to mention, let alone praise, political parties. His subsequent elevation to a Ministerial position in Local Government & Lands was to give him the opportunity to translate his beliefs into practice.

Answer: the Councillor is advised to contact her party machinery at Headquarters, for the necessary guidance. Matters for party politics are best left to the politicians. When members stood for election in the various constituencies they were guided by their party machinery.¹

Although anything resembling a "party line" of policy was absent, this does not mean that there were not some divisions of opinion particularly on socio-economic issues. On two occasions the question of private versus Council enterprise caused lengthy debate: the proposal to close down the Council maintenance workshop and use private garages was heavily defeated, but equally the motion that the CDC should buy and store grain was equally unsuccessful. The matter of policy on hawkers' licences, mentioned above, was also queried by a Councillor.² But the most consistent set of innovative proposals came from radical expatriates, the leading light being Patrick van Rensburg, a South African political refugee who has been responsible for the Brigades Movement, a whole series of activities related to it and to the Swaneng Hill School. Co-opted on to a planning committee he put forward a series of proposals on conservation and public enterprise (and was opposed particularly by Mr B. Steinberg, MP, a wealthy trader).³ The institution of the District Development Committee, serviced by enthusiastic expatriate volunteers, gave a valuable forum for the propagation of such ideas, and one can identify the expatriates in Serowe (and offshoots of the Swaneng Hill School in Tutume,⁴ Tonota

1 Agenda for CDC meeting, 20 FEB 67. In the Minutes however the answer appeared as: "Cllr. should consult her party machinery or Members of the National Assembly."

2 CDC Minutes, 18-19 MAR 68, 10-11 MAR 69

3 Minutes of Planning Sub-Committee of C&ED Committee, passim but especially 14 APR 67

4 See J. R. Sheffield (Ed.), Road to the Village: Case Studies in African Community Development (1974) (Chapters by Sheffield and G. P. Pearson).

and Mahalapye) as the major source of policy initiatives in the District. They found counterparts, moreover, in certain central Government Ministries (this is explored in Chapter 8).

The Council and the People

For all the CDC's reputation as a "model council" there was patently a long way to go before it could be said that the public understood what exactly the reform of local government meant. One or two quotations¹ make this plain and provide a suitable commentary with which to end this chapter.

1966: The Councillor appeared to be unable to distinguish what was Tribal from what was a Council responsibility.

1967: The Chairman on opening pointed out that although Council had completed a whole year, nothing much had been accomplished. . . . He went on to ask Councillors to seek and consider the opinion of the tribe before formulating decisions. . . . if nothing had been achieved since District Councils were founded, as one Councillor had said, the fault lay with the Councillors themselves.

1969: Most Councillors said Council could not solve the problem seeing it was difficult to arouse the interest of the people to come to their meetings. Ever since Independence people were losing interest in public affairs. . . . unanimously RESOLVED: that people should be encouraged to attend official public meetings.

1973: Council had also not reached the stage where people were satisfied with its work.

1 CDC Minutes 12 SEP 66, 20-22 JUL 67, 23-25 JUN 69, 20-21 MAR 73

CHAPTER 5

THE NORTH EAST DISTRICT COUNCIL

The frontier North East District (the rural part of the area known as the Tati District)¹ although one of the smallest in Botswana, has always attracted a disproportionate amount of attention, and this continues right up to 1977 with armed incursions from Rhodesia bringing a new kind of newsworthiness to the District.²

Three hundred miles from Gaborone by untarred road,³ the District's 29,000 inhabitants look for commercial services to Francistown and Bulawayo more than Gaborone, with the Rhodesian-owned railway providing an important link between all three places. The North East is a pioneering district in a number of ways. In political terms the Tati District provided the base for the first serious political party in Bechuanaland, the People's Party,⁴ which from the first articulated an anti-colonialist, Pan-Africanist philosophy; in those days Francistown was the largest urban centre in the Protectorate. Right up to (and including) 1974 the BPP has received a majority of votes in the Tati District. The North East District Council is unique among the Local Authorities for having experienced contests for every single

1 Formerly known as the Tati Concession. Administratively one District Commissioner covers both Francistown and the North East District.

2 See series of Botswana High Commission (London) Press Releases, 1976 and 1977 ["Monthly Newsletter"].

3 I.e. at Independence; since then parts of the main North-South road have been tarred and more is planned.

4 See BPP Constitution, para. 2: National Headquarters.

seat on the Council in the 1966, 1969 and 1974 elections, and also in having had an Opposition majority of elected members on all these occasions. Likewise in Parliamentary elections the District has given its loyalty consistently to the People's Party. The North East District, then, is the original Opposition stronghold.

In another sense the North East was a pioneering one, in having the first secondary school (no longer extant) and a traditional regard for education which is doubtless connected with the poverty of the rural hinterland of Francistown combined with the influence of (in colonial days) European-controlled Francistown as an enclave in its midst.

Two main theories are adduced to account for the persistent loyalty of the people of the North East to the People's Party. The first is put forward by those who see Batswana politics as "tribalist" and is based on the fact that the bulk of the population are Kalanga and speak a language which is incomprehensible to the Setswana-speaking majority of Botswana (it is close to Shona, which indicates the origins of the Kalangas). This is reflected in the fact that the BPP in its literature used all three languages (English, Setswana and Kalanga) and that the language issue has been raised by the BPP MPs.¹ There are two obvious objections to this argument. One is the fact (noted already) that Kalangas in the neighbouring Central District have voted predominantly for the ruling BDP. The other is the success of the BPP in the Mochudi constituency, in the Kgatleng, and in a number of District Council elections.²

1 See below, p. 381

2 A further, more refined objection to the "Kalanga theory" points to the heterogeneous origins of the people of the District, despite the prevalence of the Kalanga language there. This is explored in I. Schapera, The Native land problem in the Tati district (Bechuanaland Protectorate) (1943), which is essential reading for a proper understanding of the District.

The alternative explanation sees the BPP vote in the Tati District as a protest against deprivation. An eloquent description of the area begins: "The history of north-eastern Botswana formerly known as the Tati Concession is one of exploitation," and continues: "The North East is in fact a depressed area."¹

It is the combination of two elements which make for the depressed state of the District. These are land and people. If one takes the estimate of the Administrator of the Tati Settlement Project,² 37,000 people need to be considered as the true population of the District which would give a notional density figure of 7 per square kilometre (18 per square mile). But this figure, although high compared with the national figure of 3.0 persons per square mile³ is highly misleading. Even if the de facto population of 26,000 (enumerated in the 1971 census) is used it is in fact confined to less than half the district, since 59% is still owned by the freehold farmers and the Tati Company. The 41% is divided into the communal land tenure area (17% of the district) and the land which the State acquired from the Tati Company in 1969.⁴ So the pressure on land is severe: even if all the land were purchased by the Government it is doubtful if it would be sufficient to support the present human and livestock population without degrading

1 J. Flood, Report on Development Projects Supported by Botswana Christian Council (1974), p. 234

2 E. B. Egner (Administrator, Tati Settlement Project), Interim Report of the Tati Settlement Project (1971) [Subsequently referred to as Egner, Interim Report] p. 2

3 For consideration of demography generally, see P. Smit, Botswana: Resources & Development (1970), Chapter III

4 See R. P. Werbner, "Land, Movement and Status among Kalanga of Botswana," in M. Fortes (Ed.), Essays in Social Anthropology (1976), Ch. 7 (especially p. 98)

the vegetation.¹ It can readily be seen, therefore, that land is the main political issue.

The politically delicate situation is made explosive by the juxtaposition of well-watered white farms and an over-stocked Kalanga "reserve". As will be seen, the large cattle owners and the really poor peasants have a common grievance in the form of land hunger, but their interests in other respects diverge.

The final ingredient in the political complexion of the area is provided by the experience of Tati Company rule in Francistown. The main town in the North East at first sight used to resemble a South African town of comparable size,² with a predominantly white, low-density "Francistown proper" on one side of the river and the railway, and the densely-populated, almost wholly African Tatitown, complete with shanties, company beerhalls and appalling hygiene on the other side. Moreover the South African-owned Company had a legal monopoly of trading, controlled the granting of trading licences and imposed levies on goods. For a town in an independent African country Francistown was incredible; and it did little to make the Company rule more palatable to go back in history to the granting of mineral concessions by Lobengula and the British colonial office.³ Add to the picture the racist attitudes of visiting white Rhodesians and one could wonder not at the support of the North-easterners for the People's Party but at their basic tolerance. It was no coincidence that the Vice-President of the Republic chose Francistown to make a major speech on race relations.⁴

1 Egner, Interim Report, (op. cit.), pp. 3-4, 18

2 Flood, op. cit., pp. 297-300. The desire to transform the apartheid appearance of Francistown underlay the 1970 Francistown Planning Proposals.

3 Ibid.,; Schapera, op. cit., Section I, Appendices A and B

4 BDN, 17 MAY 71; the speech was printed and distributed nationwide.

One final aspect of the social structure of the District should be mentioned to complete this background sketch. The traditional administration is de-centralised (as are, incidentally, the "villages", in contradistinction to the Tswana pattern):¹ i.e. there is no "Paramount Chief" or "Chief" of the Tati District. Instead a number of independent Chiefs - described misleadingly in official parlance as sub-Chiefs - are recognised;² the Kalanga term Shè is frequently employed in referring to these Chiefs. For purposes of representation in the House of Chiefs one Shè is chosen to represent the Tati District as a whole.

INTERNAL WORKINGS

Parties and Elections within the Council

Party politics were an important aspect of the District Council and yet the analysis of them is rather involved; thus the generalisation that the BPP had a majority of elected members but the BDP was in over-all control has to be considerably modified. In the first elections (in 1966) the BPP won four seats, the BDP two and G. E. N. Mannathoko, was elected as an Independent (against BDP and BPP opponents). The Government then used its powers of nominating three additional members, all of whom were expected to support the BDP in the Council, to give seats to three Shès (Chiefs/Sub-Chiefs). The party balance thus was: BDP - 5; BPP - 4; Independent - 1; total - 10.

Moreover with Chief S. K. Ramokate elected Chairman (unopposed), it looked as if the BDP would be in command through his casting vote.

1 In both respects there are parallels with the pattern of Igbo organisation in Eastern Nigeria.

2 See Schapera, op. cit., especially Sections I and II

However the post of Vice-Chairman went to N. Gunda, the most influential People's Party Councillor, who defeated Chief Mosojane by 6 votes to 4. This indication that the BDP vote could not be counted on to remain solid was confirmed in the election which followed for the finance committee, in which Chief G. Moroka was unsuccessful. For the remainder of the committee elections the nominees were unopposed. The nomination pattern reveals the early strategy of both BPP and the Independent to support each other, thus blocking whatever chance there may have been of a BDP steamroller. At any rate the Opposition Councillors did as well in the number of committee seats gained per head as did the BDP. However the most significant statistic to note about these elections was that no Councillor failed to be elected to some office as there were more than enough seats to go round. Two BPP Councillors, the Independent Councillor and the nominated BDP Councillor Chief Ramokate all ended up with more than one place. The balance of the parties in the standing committees was roughly fifty:fifty with the BPP in all but one case (for the first two years) having half the seats; with Councillor Mannathoko's support they would have been able to control the important Finance Committee.

The effectiveness of the BDP as a group was hampered by the rather non-political nature of the Chiefs and the evidence suggests that, while both groups caucussed about elections, the BPP more frequently met together than did the BDP as well as having a somewhat more coherent philosophy. It was not very surprising that when, following the death of one of the aristocratic nominated Councillors, the Government chose a replacement it was a BDP candidate defeated in the 1966 election - a trend which was confirmed in the 1969 nominations.

Another key factor in the question of party control over office allocation was the position of G. E. N. Mannathoko. Mannathoko had

revealed the strength of his support in the 1965 General Election when as Independent he polled a respectable 20.3%, and this was confirmed by his easy victory in the Masunga Polling District in the 1966 Local Government elections. At first, as has been seen, he collaborated with the BPP, culminating in his election as Chairman of the District Council for 1967/68 (defeating Chief Ramokate), only to lose a year later to Chief Ramokate;¹ a certain rivalry certainly existed between these two influential figures.

Ramokate's growing unpopularity gave the BPP a chance of unseating him and this was achieved in spectacular fashion on a motion proposed by a BPP Councillor, seconded by a nominated BDP Councillor, early in 1969. The voting was 5-3 in favour of the no-confidence motion, and the leader of the People's Party group was then elected in a straight fight with Ramokate, by 6-2. Councillor Mannathoko and a BDP Councillor were absent, leaving the BPP and BDP with four Councillors each; it is clear therefore that first one, then two BDP Councillors forsook their party to oust Ramokate. This was the high point for the BPP, but was countered by a stern reaction from the Government. First the District Commissioner intimated that he continued to recognise the defeated Ramokate and attended the following meeting of the Council, at which he was rebuffed by the Council, who resented the Government's interference, as this passage shows:-

(c) Election of Council Chairman: A lengthy dispute took place between the District Commissioner and members of the council about the presently elected and former Chairman in conjunction with savingram [memo] Q/13/II/69 (35) of the 28th March, 1969 from the District Commissioner.

1 This time the BPP split their votes between the two candidates, reflecting the reservations they were beginning to have about Mannathoko.

(d) Resolution: The resolution of the council was that the election of another Chairman was not outside their powers and the recognition of the former Chairman by the District Commissioner did not involve this council and they, as council had elected their own Chairman.

(e) Chairman's Allowance: The Council's resolution on Chairman's allowance was that the North East District Council as a living entity, would not rely on verbal talks by the District Commissioner and the Ministry and as responsible Organization nothing stopped the payment of Chairman's allowance unless the Council itself had ordered such stoppage accordingly.¹

The matter was not however allowed to rest there and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government & Lands called another special meeting to discuss the whole question of the Chairmanship. Implicitly the Ministry ruled to the effect that a Council was not free to replace the Chairman,² thus ending the high point of BPP influence in the Council. There followed an erosion of the People's Party's support.

Towards the end of the First Session Councillor Mannathoko made the switch, albeit informally, from Independent to support of the BDP. This was publicly confirmed in his parliamentary candidacy for the Democratic Party in Tati West in 1969. By coincidence his brother R. M. Mannathoko had been appointed Permanent Secretary, Local Government & Lands, shortly before.³ Mannathoko's tacit defection from the working alliance with the People's Party was followed by a further blow for the BPP when their victorious candidate in a Council by-election, A. J. Sebeela, crossed the carpet to the BDP. These moves gave the BDP a paper majority of seven to three by the end of the First Session.

1 NEDC Minutes, 9 APR 69

2 Ibid., 20 MAY 69

3 See above, p. 26

The BPP however retaliated effectively at the polls. In October it gained a seat from the BDP (who in turn picked up the seat formerly held as an Independent by G. E. N. Mannathoko).¹ The result, BPP:5, BDP:2, plunged the Government into the necessity for a hard decision, since even using its power to nominate three additional members would not have guaranteed Domkrag control of the new Council. So the Cabinet had to decide whether to accept the verdict of the North East electorate or to pack the Council in blatant fashion. An order was gazetted increasing the number of nominated Councillors to 5.² As if to rub salt in the wound the nominees selected were with one exception defeated BDP candidates for the Council;³ the exception was the Permanent Secretary's brother, the former independent, who had stood unsuccessfully for the Parliamentary seat of Tati West as candidate of the Democratic Party.

Not surprisingly, the People's Party contingent walked out of the first meeting called after the election in protest.⁴ The election as Chairman of G. E. N. Mannathoko and a BDP Vice-Chairman was however followed by committee elections in which all Councillors, including the absent BPP members, were elected to various committees. It may be seen as a reflection of the unease the BDP felt about their artificial majority position but at any rate the practice of power-sharing continued

1 Who did not defend his Council seat.

2 "Establishment of the North East District Council (Amendment) Order 69, S.I. No 110 of 1969: Amendment of Section 2 of Legal Notice 28 of 1966. Subsection (2) of section 2 of the Establishment of the North East District Council Order, 1966, is amended by the deletion of the figure and words '3 nominated members' appearing therein and by the substitution therefor of the figure and words '5 nominated members'." Government Gazette, VII, 59, 7 NOV 69. See Appendix "A" for the Government's justification of the decision.

3 They included Chief Ramokate, who had stood for election this time, and the ex-BPP Councillor who lost his seat after crossing the carpet.

4 NEDC Minutes, 25-26 NOV 69. See below, p. 214.

consistently throughout the Council's history - in sharp contrast to the position in the Southern District at the same juncture, where the Opposition were left out of elected positions completely.¹

The BPP retained the initiative psychologically, as the party chosen by the people, a fact which was reflected in numerous policy positions, but they also planned to get even with Mannathoko for deserting them. Their chance came after two years of strong leadership by Chairman Mannathoko when the defection of two BDP Councillors, S. Mafa and Chief Ramokate, from a Domkrag caucus meeting enabled them to get Mafa elected Chairman, much to Mannathoko's surprise.²

From the above examples of intrigue it is obvious that party is important in the realm of internal Council elections. It should further be noted that in the Second Session the BDP kept majorities on all but one committee; for a time at least monopolised representation on the Licensing Committee and the Land Board; and chaired all committees. But as a consolation prize a newly created Health Committee was given a BPP majority and in return the committee members elected a BDP Councillor as its chairman.³ Overall the number of standing committee seats per Councillor worked out very fairly at BDP 8.7; BPP 8; Independent 10.

Procedure

The North East District Council started its life on a shoe-string, with minimal staff and makeshift offices. Its early minutes were also rather threadbare, albeit full of political interest. But the effect

1 See p. 76 above

2 NEDC Minutes, 13 JAN 72 (and personal observation). One of the BPP Councillors afterwards remarked in private that they had "coup'ed" Mannathoko.

3 NEDC Minutes, 26 FEB 73; Health Committee Minutes, 18 MAY 73

of an overworked and undertrained chief official (Secretary/Treasurer)¹ is discernible in the failure to follow proper procedure on such matters as confirmation of minutes or recording the fate of motions. This, together with the poverty of the Council, accounted in large measure for its low reputation in Government circles in Gaborone; as will be seen, the situation was transformed with the appointment of a new Secretary late in 1970, underlining the key nature of the position of Council Secretary.

As often happened in other District Councils, the Secretary answered many of the questions tabled by Councillors, as also did the District Commissioner, who played a more active part in the affairs of the North East District Council and from a much earlier date than was the case generally.² The theory of "question time" was that wherever possible the appropriate committee chairman would reply to questions falling within the remit of his committee; the North East District Council ignored it more openly than most.

Procedure became a party issue on two matters. The first was the power of committees to take final decisions (i.e. under delegated powers). A leading BPP Councillor attempted to have all committee decisions made subject to confirmation in the full Council but was informed by an official that this would contravene the Ministry's model Standing Orders. Linked with this issue was the principle of collective responsibility, which some civil servants interpreted in a restrictive way to mean that once a committee had taken a decision all members of

1 The official concerned tried several times to divest himself of one of his posts but was not successful until 1970. See NEDC Minutes 28 AUG 67 and 19 AUG 70. At the end of the First Session there were still only seven employees.

2 See below, pp. 238-242

it were then bound to support the committee's recommendation with their votes when it came to the full Council. Clearly if this policy were applied it would hamper the Opposition, since committees usually reflected the party composition of the Council as a whole. On the specific occasion when it arose however it was aimed against the former Council Chairman, Chief Ramokate, and involved the decisions of the whole Council which it was said all Councillors should support; ironically the BPP, having achieved a victory on licensing policy at that meeting, saw the decision reversed at the following meeting.¹

The uncertainty over procedure may have had something to do with the fact that bilingual copies of Standing Orders were not available until near the end of the Second Session; as in other Councils the exclusive use of English in official documents gave rise to considerable difficulties. In the North East too there was the additional problem of the language of debates. Kalanga was preferred by most Councillors, although all could understand Setswana. As a result the use of Setswana often indicated the presence of a VIP or outside official (such as a District Commissioner or District Officer); equally where the official concerned spoke only English one could find Kalanga spoken (with English translation) or a mixture of the three languages. The language was not however raised as a specific issue except in the context of education.²

Officials

The uncertainties about procedure on the part of Councillors gave the officials³ of the Council extra power. Two instances of the use of their power, the more striking for being travesties of normal interpretation, were the opinions given (and accepted) by the [Peace Corps]

1 NEDC Minutes, 26 AUG 67, 6 SEP 67

2 Ibid., 22-23 MAR 72

3 Including the Senior Revenue Officer/Education Secretary, who was asked by the Chairman to rule on procedural matters. Ibid., 28 AUG 67.

Council Adviser. A BPP Councillor's motion to "consider amendment of Standing Order 22(b)" he dismissed as "improper and it deviated from Handbook procedure." In the next meeting concerning a motion "That Council consider about Matimela" (from a BDP Councillor) the ruling given was that "This item has been moved several times for discussion which is against the Standing Order." The post of Council Adviser, it should be explained, was created to allow Peace Corpsmen with degrees in law and/or public administration to help to improve the running of the Councils; it is perhaps not surprising that the North East District Council should resolve, at the same meeting, not to seek a replacement for the first appointee.¹

The Council Adviser's ruling preventing the debate of a motion on a subject discussed at a previous meeting was at odds with previous practice. On another occasion the Secretary persuaded the Council to debate the decision it had taken at a prior meeting not to approve the sale of Chibuku beer; the decision was in fact reversed.² A more questionable example of official power was the rewriting of minutes, inter alia to delete a passage critical of the District Commissioner's handling of applications for building on state land;³ the revised version was approved with only minor corrections.⁴

As in the other Councils studied, the personality of the Council Secretary was a factor of major importance. This is well illustrated by the change in style which followed the appointment of D. K. Kwele to the post late in 1970. Kwele was an exceptional figure in many ways.

1 NEDC Minutes, 27 JAN 70, 8 AUG 70

2 Ibid., 11 SEP 69

3 Ibid., 23-24 AUG 73 (two versions); letter of 19 SEP 73 from Council Secretary to District Commissioner. The meeting in question was attended by the Permanent Secretary, MLG&L.

4 NEDC Minutes, 21 NOV 73

A past President of the National Front, and a very active one at that,¹ he was greatly disappointed, firstly by the Front's decision not to nominate him as their Presidential candidate in the General Election of 1969, and secondly by his poor performance at the polls in the northern (Central District) constituency of Nkange, where he came third with a mere 10.6% of the votes. This experience convinced Kwele of the impracticality of the vision of the BNF - as it was then constituted - as inheritor of the Opposition mantle in the north. Kwele brought colour and controversy to a rather depressed Council office, not least in the grandiloquent English for which he was renowned. Council meetings and minutes became much more lengthy, Action Sheets were produced, and the Secretary's position generally took on a more central aspect.

This new level of activity did not necessarily mean that the North East District Council became that much more efficient. Indeed the new administration was described in the report commissioned for the Botswana Christian Council in the following words: "the Council Secretary . . . is a man of irrational ways . . ."² The Secretary himself admitted on one occasion "that he had been extremely busy and could not carry out the Council resolutions."³

One might ask what the Secretary was so busy doing that he could not implement Council resolutions. One answer, in general, was that Kwele (like his counterpart in the Central District) spent a fair amount

1 For examples see BDN 7 JUL 67, 25 APR 69, 30 APR 69, 23 JUN 69; also above, pp. 25-26.

2 J. Flood, op. cit., p. 237

3 NEDC Minutes, 23-24 MAY 73

of time on tours of the District,¹ for which he was allowed to purchase a van. These tours were the subject of reports to the Council, and, while sometimes organised to deal with specific problems - such as refusal to pay water fees - also allowed him to make speeches and frequent appearances which gave the impression that he was building up a base of support in the District. Whether he was toying with the idea of a return to national politics - and if so, under what umbrella - is a matter for conjecture. Certainly he had a flair for publicity, as his meeting with the immigrant religious minority, the Mazezuru, showed, since it resulted in a front page story in the Daily News.²

Some of the functions which in the First Session were performed by the Chairman - e.g. trouble-shooting in the District and liaising with Government department - were taken over by the incoming Secretary. This may be what prompted a resolution (passed with two-party support) that the Chairman should visit the Council offices twice a week.³

Some idea of Kwele's policy objectives may be gleaned from moves he made to initiate debate shortly before the 1974 General Election on a series of issues which were both popular and central to the policy of the BPP; the upshot was that the BPP line was endorsed by the Council as a whole, despite opposition from individual BDP Councillors.⁴ On

1 NEDC Minutes, 17-18 JUN 71, 12-13 JUN 74; Finance & General Purposes Committee Minutes, 20 JAN 71; NEDC Minutes 22-23 MAR 72; for some references see BDN, 4 JUL 71, 27 JUN 72, 11 SEP 72 and 4 MAY 73.

2 NEDC Minutes 23-24 MAY 73; BDN, 2 JUL 73, and also 31 JUL 73.

3 NEDC Minutes, 12 DEC 68, 25 MAR 69, 22-23 MAR 71.

4 Ibid., 20-22 FEB 74, 12-13 JUN 74; see p. 224 below.

the other hand there was a suspicion in some quarters that Kwele was secretly close to the ruling BDP and was merely trying to steal the Opposition's clothes. In support of this theory it was alleged that Kwele had developed a close relationship with the leading BDP figure in the District, Councillor Mannathoko, and it was common knowledge that he was in almost daily telephone contact with the latter's brother, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government & Lands. Whatever the truth of the matter, Kwele remained an enigmatic figure.¹

Facilities and Remuneration

By and large Councillors put up with poor facilities² at the Council offices in Tatitown, with new offices on the way, and made few complaints.³ Nor did they make any demands for local facilities for themselves. Maybe this was due to the general lack of facilities in the District and the consequent habit of looking to Francistown for most services; moreover although the state of the roads, especially in the rainy season, made travel very difficult, the distances as the crow flies are relatively small.

On allowances, too, the North-Eastern Councillors were somewhat more abstemious, making fewer demands for increases of the kind made in the other two Councils. There was however one notable occasion when Councillors sat down and pruned estimates under a number of heads in order to finance the increase authorised by the Ministry; the items cut included boreholes, dams and staff training.⁴

1 As a postscript it can be noted that Kwele made no attempt to involve himself again in party politics at the 1974 elections. He has since been transferred to another District.

2 It was only when a VIP visited the Council offices that Councillors resolved to try to get proper toilet facilities provided, to obviate embarrassment to distinguished visitors. NEDC Minutes, 9 APR 69.

3 Ibid., 22 DEC 70, 9 MAY 73

4 Ibid., 6 SEP 68, 23-24 MAY 73; 8 JUL 70.

Issues

Water The North East District is plagued with the problem of too much water at certain times and places and too little at others - a situation which has been officially known since 1905.¹ A major coördinated effort was required to solve the related problems of water, land and communications and this was beyond the Council's capacity to plan for.² Council activity on the water front, therefore, concentrated on smaller-scale problems.

The first of these problems was the reluctance of consumers of water for non-domestic purposes (i.e. stock watering) to pay the water fees ordained by the NEDC. The committee responsible reported "the deplorable condition of its collection of revenue" to the full Council, who sent the Secretary, in conjunction with the local chiefs to talk to backsliders. He reported back on the "flimsy excuses" that had been produced and Council reaffirmed its determination to collect all fees, including arrears, from the communities concerned.³ But the time-lag of almost six years between the first decision to charge water fees and this "tough" resolution suggests that Councillors, regardless of party, were far from anxious to force the issue.

Cattle The question of matimela recurred regularly and took two forms. In the area of communal land tenure a great deal of discontent was expressed over the failure of Chiefs and Headmen to implement the the matimela regulations, and indignation was expressed in particular at Chief Ramokate's reluctance to operate the scheme until it had been fully discussed in all kgotlas in the District. A significant aspect

1 See Flood, op. cit., pp. 234-241; Schapera, op. cit., pp. 20-21 (and Commission Report of 1905 cited in ibid., Appendix C).

2 The District Development Committee and the Tati Settlement Project were the key agents of change in this sphere; their impact is discussed later.

3 NEDC Minutes, 22 DEC 70, 22-23 MAR 72, 21-23 JUN 72

of Council debates on the subject was the all-party combination of Independent, BDP and BPP in criticism of the Chiefs.¹ On this issue the interests of cattle-owning commoners (well represented on the BDP benches) deviated from those of the Chiefs.

In the case of the State Land and Freehold or Tati Company land, the parties parted company several times. A lengthy debate initiated by Chairman Mannathoko, on the effects of having the only matimela pound for the Tati District in Francistown (run by the Town Council), revealed this clearly. A BDP motion to have the pound law abolished failed on a tied vote after the District Commissioner had defended the law eloquently as a defence of the interests of the poor; a BPP counter-motion to ask the Francistown Town Council to levy District fees on North East animals in the pound likewise failed 6:6. In each case one BDP Councillor must have voted with the Opposition.² Subsequently on initiatives from BDP Councillors it was agreed to ask the Government to establish a North East District pound.³

Land Similar configurations of party conflict and collaboration were to be found on the land question. A united front was formed whenever the issue of the eviction of African farmers ("squatters") arose from European-owned or Tati Company land areas, which happened several times in the 1968/69 period. Petitions, delegations and protest letters were agreed upon unanimously.⁴ Similar action was taken to have fences removed which blocked roads customarily regarded as rights of way.

1 NEDC Minutes 28 AUG 67, 11 DEC 68, 8 APR 70, 26-27 FEB 73

2 Ibid., 22 DEC 70

3 Ibid., 10 MAR 71, 12-13 JUN 74

4 Ibid., 6 SEP 68, 11 DEC 68, 6 FEB 69, 9 APR 69

The consensus became somewhat frayed however over the question of the Tati Land Board. To be sure, the BPP did not oppose its establishment, or the motion to give it control of State Land. But one People's Party Councillor questioned why the Land Board was composed solely of Chiefs - which was not strictly true, but it was overwhelmingly BDP in composition.¹

Likewise the proposals embodied in the Tati Settlement Project, which were to give rise to a sharp conflict of interests expressed at the national level, did not lead to a clear party division. In part this was due to the complexity of the question, one which, as Schapera pointed out, was identified as urgent in 1931 by the then Resident Magistrate, who warned:

There exists a situation affecting native settlement which in the near future will cause the Administration much anxiety. . . . I consider that half the native population in the Native Reserve should be evacuated and that would leave room for the remainder and give them space for expansion. . . .

The Makalaka [Kalangas] have made no progress and their wealth is not increasing owing to deplorable over-stocking. The position is clear, i.e. the Government must give serious thought to the relieving of the congestion, and the question must not be long delayed.² \

Schapera goes on to say: "The Reserve as a whole is wickedly grazed out."³

The failure of the colonial administration to act on Schapera's comprehensive recommendations was a principal reason for the radical politics of the bulk of the people of the North East District. Three years after Independence the President decided to grasp the nettle and announced, in an election campaign speech in Francistown, the acquisition

1 NEDC Minutes, 26 APR 68, 23-24 MAY 73, 21-23 JUN 72. See also Werbner, op. cit., p. 103, on the enhancement of the sub-chiefs' status resulting from the new system.

2 The "Nettleton Report" cited in Schapera, op. cit., p. 8

3 Ibid., p. 16

by the State of a sizeable tract of land from the Tati Company.¹ The question of what to do with it was then left to a radical Manx economist/civil servant who was appointed Tati Settlement Project Administrator. His report² was then submitted to the Government. The Cabinet were met with determined opposition to some of the recommendations by Richard Mannathoko, and Egner was called to appear before the Cabinet to defend his report. The real issue at stake was whether the vacant land was to be used as cattle post (grazing) land for the wealthier cattle-owners, or whether the larger herds of cattle would be forced to move to land further away, in the North of the Central District. Clearly there was here all the potential for a party cleavage but, owing to the complexities of the administrative procedure for considering it, by the end of Session II it had not surfaced in the Council.

Nevertheless certain related issues did arise, for instance the recognition as permanent settlements of villages like Themashanga on State Land and their consequent right to services such as schools. There was continuing controversy over the proposal for village grouping, i.e. the attempt to organise the decentralised Kalanga villages into nucleated settlements on the Tswana pattern. The BDP, and especially the Chiefs, were keen on the idea. For their part the BPP found it difficult to resist the argument that it would make the provision of services to villages much easier if more people lived near one central point in each village, but questioned the wisdom of forcing people to move. Accordingly the Council as a whole agreed in principle to the idea, but with BPP reservations about its practicability.³ Soon afterwards the

1 See Macartney, "Botswana Goes to the Polls," Africa Report, XIV, 8 (DEC 69), and ibid., XVI, 2 (FEB 71) for corrigenda; BDN, 17 SEP 69.

2 Egner, op. cit.

3 NEDC Minutes, 23-24 MAY 73, 21 NOV 73; 20-23 SEP 72; 21 NOV 73, 20-22 FEB 74

Council Secretary ingeniously introduced the subject of tiny villages; in the lengthy debate that followed, the BPP line - to accept that such settlements had the right to remain, even if their chance of receiving amenities were thereby reduced - was accepted.¹ Another BPP victory was achieved on a motion to provide compensation for people whose land was invaded by roads or pipelines.²

Education Although education received the greatest amount of attention from Councillors - and indeed an official address to an incoming District Commissioner remarked "Generally this is an Education Council"³ - the amount of dispute over education was slight.

One sensitive issue was the demotion, dismissal or transfer of teachers and on several occasions the Education Committee recommendations or decisions were rejected,⁴ before the committee's right to take final decisions was established. Much more controversial was the proposal to close down small "uneconomic" schools:

On the question of the uneconomic schools, the Education Committee had expressed the necessity to have such schools closed. . . .
Council then plunged into a very serious debate, with feeling running very high and characterized by very bitter exchanges. It was indeed, a tug of war. . . .
After lengthy and tense debate Council resolved that the matter be shelved. . . .⁵

On subsequent reconsideration of the matter

Council unanimously resolved that such schools should continue since schools were not run for profits - but for the purpose of fighting against illiteracy.⁶

The decision was essentially a success for the People's Party's arguments.

1 NEDC Minutes, 12-13 JUN 74

2 Topic again introduced by the Secretary. NEDC Minutes 23-24 AUG 73

3 Ibid., 28 AUG 67

4 Ibid., 12 OCT 66; Education Committee Minutes, 22 JUL 69; NEDC Minutes 31 JUL 69.

5 Ibid., 10 MAR 71

6 Ibid., 17-18 SEP 71

Commerce It was perhaps predictable that there should be differences of opinion between a group of BDP Councillors, almost all of whom were shop owners, and the BPP, only one of whom was a businessman. A major clash came on the question of hawkers' licences - which as has been seen, was a controversial subject in other Councils.¹ The BPP brought up the topic of licensing hawkers and were opposed by two BDP members who maintained that there was no point in entertaining the suggestion as there was no area in the Reserve without a shop.

Councillor K. K. Sechele [BPP] then said that in fact the council was composed of too many traders who must know that they had been elected by the people and that if they refused entirely to make a bye-law for hawking the electorate would undoubtedly conclude that they are protecting their own interests.²

Assisted by a temporary defection from the BDP, the BPP succeeded in getting the motion through the Council (5:4, Chairman abstaining) "that the council make a bye-law allowing for hawkers in the area."³ At the next meeting however the voting went against the BPP and in favour of a BDP amendment to adopt hawking bye-laws only subject to the following proviso: "That the Council advise the licensing authority to limit licences to places where there were no established stores."⁴ As the licensing authority was firmly under BDP control there was every likelihood of its heeding the Council's advice.

Another round of the contest over commercial policy was fought over the question of the granting of applications by the District Commissioner for shops in the State Lands:

1 See above, pp. 112-113 and 165

2 NEDC Minutes, 28 AUG 67

3 Ibid.

4 NEDC Minutes, 15 SEP 67

Minute C55/73 Permanent Structure in Statelands: Council condemned the way the District Commissioner handles applications for permanent structures in Statelands. . . .¹

In spite of this resolution, the BPP Chairman² of the Licensing Authority was unable to dissuade the committee from proceeding (with the District Commissioner's encouragement) with applications for trading licences on State Land.³

Revenue The North East District's position as the country's second-poorest district (defined in terms of per capita deficit grant received from the Government)⁴ was reflected in the much greater attention paid by the Council to the problems of revenue raising, including several tax drives, repeated attempts (successful in the main) to get revenue from Francistown Town Council and, most striking of all, bi-partisan agreement on taxing bicycles, beer, "tea-parties", wood gathering and "Scotchcarts".⁵ Evidently the People's Party were prepared to suppress doubts about these unpopular taxes in order to widen the Council's woefully thin tax base.

Destitution As befits what has been described as a "rural slum",⁶ there was a problem of destitution but the Council, though anxious to grant as much relief as possible, could only afford the sum of R1 per month for the destitutes it was able to assist.⁷ Remittances from

1 NEDC Minutes, 23-24 AUG 73, original version (deleted from revised versions).

2 It may appear anomalous, but when the Licensing Authority (Committee) changed from being a BDP monopoly it then elected a BPP Chairman, the BDP nevertheless retaining its majority.

3 Licensing Authority Minutes, 28 SEP 73

4 Flood, op. cit., p. 234

5 NEDC Minutes, 18 SEP 71. "Tea parties" are rather more alcoholic than the name might suggest; "Scotchcart" is the official description for a kind of open ox-drawn waggon.

6 Flood, op. cit., p. 236

7 F&GP Committee Minutes, 29 JAN 72

relatives (in Francistown and elsewhere) kept many of the District's Population from starvation.¹ Possibly as a consequence of the small size of Councillors' wards the difficulties experienced in other districts in identifying destitutes did not surface in the North East.

PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The North East District's mode of dealing with planning and the allocation of resources in general differed markedly from the practice obtaining in the other two Councils, in the much closer scrutiny to which plans were subjected. Indeed, apart from the first annual estimates, which were approved formally,² all plans and estimates were subject to debate even if eventually approved.³ There are many instances of amendments to estimates and development plans,⁴ usually in the form of additions to lists of projects. Two reasons can be advanced to account for the high degree of interest in planning: the absence of special Council planning machinery (owing to the small size of the Council) and the consequent debating of more business in full Council; and the level of political awareness in general.

It is however very noteworthy that the party division so apparent on many other questions (already discussed) is virtually absent from this aspect of Council business. Instead the tendency was for geography rather than party to predominate in arguments about the allocation of projects. This was undoubtedly aided by the Government's choice of nominated BDP Councillors from amongst the Chiefs (in the First Session) and even more so from defeated Domkrag candidates (in both Sessions). There were thus, particularly in the Second Session, two Councillors

1 Egner, op. cit., pp. 5-6; and C. Kerven, Migration to Francistown and the effects on the urban and rural community (1976)

2 NEDC Minutes, 12 OCT 66

3 E.g. ibid., 27 JAN 70, 8 APR 70; Development Committee Minutes, 5 FEB 71

4 NEDC Minutes, 11 DEC 68, 8 JUL 70, 8 AUG 72, 20-21 DEC 72, 9 MAY 73.

from all but one ward¹ and they often combined to pursue local interests despite their different party labels. A classic case was the argument over the location of the one major clinic (as opposed to the smaller health posts) which the Development Committee had decided the District should have. The Council was split down the middle on the merits of the largest village (Mapoka) versus a small but more central settlement (Malambakwena). Eventually the advice of the Tati Settlement Project Administrator was crucial in resolving the deadlock.² The close involvement of the District Administration with the North East District Council (strengthened and institutionalised by the District Development Committee) was a further factor in the tendency for decisions on the allocation of development expenditure to be taken on hard data rather than on a party basis.

EXTERNAL ASPECTS

Village Development/Ipelegeng

Voluntary self-help was not a great success in the North East, as the following quotations testify. The first came eighteen months after the Council had been established.

[The motion] that means be devised to improve response to communal collections and communal projects once they have been agreed on by a community . . . was discussed at length and the council resolved that it be referred to the House of Chiefs as it was a territorial [i.e national] problem.³

1 It is perhaps not purely coincidence that it was the Councillor for the only ward (Kalakamati) which consistently supported the BDP who complained at the neglect of his ward; he was refuted by three other Councillors, two BPP and one other BDP. NEDC Minutes 26-27 FEB 73

2 Development Committee Minutes, 5 FEB 71; NEDC Minutes 10 MAR 71

3 Ibid., 30 JAN 68

Four years later the position was little better, and the Secretary reported:

Owing to limitations in staffing and failure of some Village Development Committees to render the contribution they should, consequently some projects have not yet been completed.¹

The Assistant Community Development Officer was even more outspoken:

Progress on self-help projects have been very very poor, there will be no completed projects at the end of this year. . . . It is really disappointing that there will not be a single self-help completed project at the end of the year 1972. When other councils will be embarking on their 1973 projects, the North East District will be struggling back like an oxen wagon with the 1972 projects. . . . I fail to see how shall we be able to develop our areas in the district, if there are no strong efforts from the higher authorities to try to help people in their proposed projects.²

It is difficult to ascertain the precise reasons for this general failing, but certainly there was inefficiency in dealing with project application forms (which went through the Council Development Committee and were then sent by the Secretary to the Community Development Department) and in forwarding names of workers (by Councillors), while "unforeseen circumstances" prevented delivery of building materials. On the ground some VDCs experienced problems in keeping track of funds and Councillors were asked to intervene to supervise.³ The scattered population pattern typical of Kalanga country exacerbated the nationwide problem of seasonal migration; this gave rise to problems of "sub-VDCs", which were referred to the Community Development Department. A motion to allow four small villages to form one VDC was however referred to the local Chief on the grounds that "Council has nothing to do with the formation of VDCs as this is the duty of chiefs and their people."

1 NEDC Minutes, 13 JAN 72

2 North East DDC Minutes, 10 NOV 72 (3rd Appendix)

3 NEDC Minutes, 8 JUL 70, 10 MAR 71, 26-27 FEB 73.

Nevertheless some VDCs and PTAs operated independently of both Chiefs and Councillors and had to be told to invite both ex officio members to their meetings, as late as 1973.¹

In attempting to deal with the problems of Ipelegeng the North East District Council embarked on a policy of hiring workers, and eventually persuaded the Ministry to lift its veto which was imposed (on policy grounds).² Kwele as Council Secretary particularly encouraged this cash-based approach,³ which certainly was popular with many people (and increased their dependence on the Council) but transferred Ipelegeng into a rather different system from the original pure self-help idea. A further application of this approach was the Council's role in supervising the progress of VDC projects in detail.⁴ It should be added that, on this subject, party allegiance did not play any obvious part in determining Councillors' behaviour. Further details are given in Chapter 6.

A contrast with other Districts was the welcome given (or at least the absence of complaints about) the major Government programme of Drought Relief and Accelerated Rural Development; the only complaint was that the effect of staff movements resulting from the new Unified Local Government Service interfered with the implementation of the ARDP.⁵ The overall conclusion therefore is that the impoverished North East generally welcomed any extra cash or other resources coming to the District as a relief from the problems which beset the self-help programme.

1 NEDC Minutes, 20-23 SEP 72, 26-27 FEB 73, 23-24 MAY 73

2 Ibid., 11 DEC 68, 22 DEC 70, 26-27 FEB 73, 25 APR 73, 23-24 AUG 73

3 E.g. encouraging the purchasing of bricks from, and by, VDCs: ibid., 17-18 JUN 71 and 20-21 DEC 72; F&GP Committee Minutes, 17 MAY 73

4 NEDC Minutes, 20-23 SEP 72. See also p. 297 below.

5 NEDC Minutes, 21 NOV 73, 12-13 JUN 74

The role of Councillors

In spite of the relatively high level of activity displayed by North Eastern Councillors there was a fair amount of uncertainty about their precise role;¹ witness the rather plaintive question, tabled by a Councillor with four years' experience behind him, "What is our duty in the Council as Councillors?" (He was referred to the Handbook.)² This particular Councillor in any case was notably assiduous in asking for progress reports on the implementation of decisions affecting his ward.³ This watchdog role was performed by other Councillors too, but more typical was the role of spokesman performed by most Councillors.⁴

Individual Councillors were mandated to investigate various problems, such as the blocking of roads by fences, or humiliations allegedly inflicted by European farmers, or formed part of delegations to meet the Tati Company (concerning evictions) or villagers with water problems. Councillors were also given administrative or supervisory duties on such matters as tax drives, the recruitment of navvies, and VDC finances.⁵ Perhaps the most noteworthy point about this activity was that BPP Councillors were as much involved as their BDP counterparts.

A perennial problem, in this District as in the others, was delimitation of powers between Councillors and Chiefs/Headmen. Thus

1 Evidenced at conferences, e.g. UBLS, Division of Extra Mural Services, Councillors Seminar; report on the second seminar for Councillors for The Francistown Town Council and North East District Council.

2 NEDC Minutes, 8 JUL 70

3 E.g. ibid., 25 MAR 69

4 Good examples ibid., 28 AUG 67, 26 APR 68, 11 SEP 68 and 23-24 AUG 73.

5 Ibid., 17-18 SEP 71, 22-23 MAR 72, 6 SEP 68, 23-24 MAY 73, 30 JAN 68, 22 DEC 70, 26-27 FEB 73

Councillors were advised to "co-operate with chiefs and give them advice," while the Chiefs were told they should co-operate with Councillors. Still the question kept recurring:

In reply to a question . . . about the power of the headman over the councillor, the Secretary said that the Chief/Headman has powers at his Kgotla, while the Councillor is a representative of his ward.

But as late as 1973 Councillors were still passing resolutions to the effect that "Council should remind Chiefs and Councillors about their duties."¹

The Traditional Administration

Relations between Councillors and Chiefs were characterised not only by uncertainty but also by friction manifested in a highly critical attitude by many Councillors towards the Chiefs, as is instanced by the following quotation on the question of the grant for Independence Day celebrations, "Sub-chiefs and Headmen were strongly warned that this money was to be used on the day of celebrations by all." At its next meeting Council supported a circular sent by the Secretary to all concerned warning that receipts or statements on oath could be required to account for the spending of this grant.²

Much fire was directed at the Chiefs for their tardiness in sending in lists of matimela - for instance by the end of 1968 only two beasts had been reported - and this led to allegations that Chiefs were concealing the strays. The solution adopted was the calling in of Chiefs' lists to be entered up centrally by the Council, but even then the complaints continued that Chiefs were evading the law. A

¹ NEDC Minutes, 15 SEP 67, 26 APR 68, 17-18 JUN 71, 26-27 FEB 73

² Ibid., 11 SEP 70, 22 DEC 70

rather different charge was that Chiefs had interfered with the construction of dams by trying to alter their location to suit their own purposes.¹

Yet despite these blunt criticisms of Chiefs' behaviour, there was no attempt to ignore, far less do away with their traditional administrative functions. Even the disputed Independence Day fund continued to be allocated according to Chiefs' areas of jurisdiction and channelled through them, while their customary function of acting as a channel for consultation on such matters as the draft Land Bill and village grouping or the non-payment of water fees was supplemented by their ex officio membership of local tax exemption vetting committees (together with the local Councillor). They were also - rather inefficiently - involved in selecting destitutes and (with the help of the Community Development Department, when available) in the formation of VDCs.²

Thus it appeared as if there was considerable support in the Council for the institution of chieftainship, as distinct from the behaviour of individual chiefs, and this was brought out with particular clarity by a resolution, passed nem. con., expressing concern at falling attendances at kgotla meetings and petitioning the Government to give the Chiefs powers to compel the public to attend such meetings. Such support was probably necessary for an institution which was being weakened by the traditional tactic of rebellion, the breaking-away of disaffected elements. Chief Ramokate, seconded by a BDP Councillor, succeeded in getting a majority of Councillors to support him in condemning breakaway settlements and asking the District Commissioner not

1 NEDC Minutes, 11 DEC 68, 9 APR 67, 27 JAN 70, 8 APR 70, 26-27 FEB 73; F&GP Minutes, 17 MAY 73.

2 NEDC Minutes, 11 DEC 68, 7 JUL 69, 25 APR 68, 20-21 DEC 72, 22-23 MAR 72, 25 MAR 69, 11 SEP 67, 26-27 FEB 73

to recognise such "unauthorised settlements" on State Land.¹ The weakness in the system was enhanced by the lack of the unifying control exercised in the Tswana clans² as well as by the existence of state land next door to communal land. Chieftainship in the Tati was not a hierarchical aristocracy so much as a squirearchy, wealthy (in relative terms) but diffused, and hence less able to fend off the challenge of the new men, with whom they tended to blend. The changed leadership (and membership) of the Council - in the Second Session only one Chief was nominated to the Council - symbolises this neatly.

Relations with the Central Government

There is an apparent paradox in the relations between the North East District and the central government. The objective conditions would seem to indicate the necessity for frequent contact between the two, these conditions being, on the one side, the dependence of this poverty-stricken district on the Government for assistance³ to supplement its own meagre resources, and, on the Government side, concern about the political and indeed strategic sensitivity of this frontier district. Yet the Council received only three VIP visits from the capital, and one of these was due to a crisis situation, while another was at the invitation of the North East District Council, viz. the opening of the new offices.⁴ Moreover minutes of the North East District Council attracted far fewer marginal comments and the only issue which appears to have interested the Minister himself was the suggestion of the

1 NEDC Minutes, 20-21 DEC 72, 20-23 SEP 72

2 See Schapera, op. cit., pp. 27-28

3 The Government felt obliged to write off the Council's debt caused by the necessity of meeting teachers' salaries at one stage; this was warmly welcomed by the Council. NEDC Minutes, 6 SEP 68

4 Ibid., 20 MAY 69, 17-18 JUN 71

closure of certain schools.¹ It is indeed a prominent feature of the Government's relations with the North East District Council that there were channelled to a very great extent through the District Commissioner, and this is discussed below.

On appropriate occasions the Council acted as a pressure group, in particular asking for additional funds for school bursaries and for a bigger grant for Independence Day celebrations.² They also revived the idea of a secondary school in the District proper³ and asked permission to inspect primary schools themselves. This last resolution - moved by a BDP Councillor and passed nem. con. - was swiftly vetoed by the Government, which announced that it had ordered an immediate inspection of schools in the North East District by the Education Officer, Francistown.⁴ Another example of a tactical win following an earlier veto concerned the payment of project workers. The Council (as has already been noted, particularly the Council Secretary) was keen on the idea of payment, but this was initially prevented by the Ministry. The eventual reversal of the decision was however the result not only of North East District Council pressure but also of the intervention of the Botswana Christian Council, which revealed that the practice of paying "allowances" had been established for years in another ministry.⁵

1 Note from Minister to Under Secretary, 24 MAR 71 (Ministry IG&L files, NEDC). Another matter which concerned him was whether the District should have a capital outwith Francistown.

2 NEDC Minutes, 28 AUG 67, 6 SEP 68

3 Ibid., 30 JAN 68. The original Tati Institute had been the brainchild of K. T. Motsete, who founded the BPP.

4 NEDC Minutes, 23-24 MAY 73, 23-24 AUG 73. This was not so much a bid for extra power as a way of protesting at the inactivity of the Ministry official concerned.

5 NEDC Minutes, 26-27 FEB 73, 23-24 AUG 73. For an illuminating account of the inter-ministerial relations concerned see Flood, op. cit., p. 239.

Differences of opinion between the Government and the Council took various forms. The most dramatic case concerned the deposition of Chairman Ramokate by his colleagues in 1969 and the two extraordinary meetings which followed (the second attended by the Permanent Secretary, Local Government & Lands), the upshot of which was the de facto reversal of the Council's decision.¹ Such speed of action and high drama were rare. More typical was the long drawnout story of the North East District Council's quest for its own matimela pound which, despite the keen interest shown in the matter by the influential Councillor Mannathoko, took the Government over three years to decide, and even longer to implement.²

Another bone of contention - as in the case of the other Councils - was relations with the Department of Water Affairs. Apart from the lengthy delays experienced in getting replies from the Department³ - which was par for the course - the North East District Council had a protracted battle over the Borehole Preventative Maintenance Scheme (BPMS) and a smallish sum of money connected therewith. It may appear almost comic for it to take two years to establish the fate of a cheque paid five years earlier into the account, but it was time-consuming (discussed at seven meetings of the full Council, not to mention the DDC and correspondence), frustrating and probably unnecessary. To add to the irony, when the money was found the Council was told that it had been fully spent. "Councillors noted that the statement was rather incredible" and doubtless regretted having (at the Secretary's instigation) reversed

1 Already discussed: see pp. 210-211 above.

2 NEDC Minutes, 10 MAR 71 and passim thereafter

3 On a different matter, see NEDC Minutes, 22 DEC 71

their earlier decision to have nothing to do with the scheme, the more so when they were presented with a bill for additional expenses incurred!¹

The other water problems which caused the Council much concern also involved Government agencies and both arose in acute form in 1972/73. Had a proper water development plan been implemented earlier the crisis in the villages of Tati Siding and Tsamaya (with Siviya) could have been avoided.² Both these villages concerned were on the Eastern, non-communal land and the situation became acute for various reasons at the end of 1972. The Council was basically unable to do anything except to act as a pressure group, which it did via the District Commissioner, the District Development Committee (of which he was Chairman) and the Ministry of Local Government & Lands. Emergency assistance was provided by the Botswana Christian Council and more permanent relief by the Government ordering Geological Survey to take action.³ This case study indicates the problems of red tape and the limitations on the power of the local authorities.

The important innovation of the Unified Local Government Service (ULGS) met with considerable criticism in the North East.

Councillors expressed great concern at the fact that, whenever Council asks the Unified Local Government Service to upgrade an Officer, the Unified Local Government Service transfers the Officer to another Council on or pending promotion. Council also deplored the system of indiscriminate transfers . . .⁴

1 NEDC Mins., 22-24 MAY 73, 22 DEC 71, 21-23 JUN 72, 23-24 AUG 73

2 The problem of water for Tati Siding was first raised by a Councillor in 1968. NEDC Minutes, 11 DEC 68.

3 Ibid., 23-24 MAY 73; North East DDC Minutes, 13-14 DEC 72, 16 OCT 73; NEDC Minutes, 23-24 AUG 73, 21 NOV 73; Flood, op. cit., p 241; NEDC Minutes 21 NOV 73, 20-22 FEB 74.

4 Ibid., 12-13 JUN 74

As if anticipating such a hostile reaction to the scheme, the Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government & Lands, addressing Council soon after the introduction of the scheme, made the following mollifying remarks:

Referring to the Unified Local Government Service, Mr Makobole pointed out that the power to employ, promote and dismiss Council's employees was taken from Councillors not because they (councillors) were inefficient, but because government realized that councillors were busy with the development of their districts and Botswana as a whole.

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In conclusion, Mr Makobole congratulated councillors for the respect they show for their Chairman, and for their understanding of Standing Orders.¹

The District Administration

The function of District Commissioners vis-à-vis District Councils was not precisely defined until the "Tordoff" reforms² of 1971 inter alia made them ex officio members of the Council and District Development Committee Chairmen. But in the North East the District Commissioner (or one of his deputies) played an important role from the inception of the District Council, attending most meetings of the full Council and some committee meetings. A number of reasons have already been suggested which combined to make the position of District Commissioner (Francistown) one of the most senior postings and probably the most exciting. In brief, the special features included the division of the Tati District - between two local authorities (Francistown Town Council and the North East District Council) and, more significantly, between the de facto communal land ownership in the Northern part of the District, the Tati Company and foreign freehold farmers and the State Lands purchased by the Government in 1969; added to which were non-legal settlements and grazing by peasant farmers in

1 NEDC Minutes, 23-24 AUG 73 (emphasis in original).

2 The Tordoff Report, op. cit., Chs. II and V

the east of the District (dividing into "recognised villages" and "squatters"), and the illegal immigration of Rhodesians. The high degree of emigration from the North East District recorded in the 1971 census (the highest in the Republic in fact) was a reflection partly of the pattern of working and living in Francistown, partly the result of job-hunting elsewhere; Francistown-born inhabitants were a minority (25%) of the town's population, 21% of which originated from the North East District.¹

Race relations in Francistown were more touchy than anywhere else in Botswana, witness the notorious decision by the white members of the Francistown Club to ostracise the first post-independence District Commissioner for telling them that a racially exclusive club was illegal and would not be tolerated; the fact that the District Commissioner concerned was an Afrikaans-speaking South African immigrant who had decided to naturalise did nothing to placate the Afrikaner farmers involved. This incident was merely one manifestation of the general fact that there was a security problem in the area, with either infiltrators or a fifth column responsible for attacks on the refugee transit camp which has long been a feature of Francistown and has enabled thousands of political refugees from South Africa and Rhodesia to escape; a further example was the need before independence to guard the BBC transmitter set up after UDI in Rhodesia to beam British broadcasts to the rebel colony.²

1 Report of the Population Census 1971 (op. cit.), pp. 107-108

2 See H. M. Tapela, "The Tati District of Botswana, 1866-1969" (1976), passim; J. Halpern, South Africa's Hostages (1965), especially pp. 452-453; R. P. Stevens, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland (1967), pp. 158-159; and J. E. Spence, "The Implications of the Rhodesia Issue for the Former High Commission Territories," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, VII, 2 (1969), p. 107.

On the party-political plane, the Tati District has been the main base for Opposition politics, which many BDP members view as basically tribalist, hence the speech by the Minister of Local Government & Lands, Mr Englishman Kgabo (on the only ministerial visit to the Council) in which "the Minister condemned tribalism."¹

On its side the Council found that at every turn it became involved with the Tati Company, the European farmers, Francistown Town Council or the Rhodesian regime. In all of these cases the District Administration was the obvious place to turn to for assistance. A few examples will illustrate the working relationship between the two.

As the voice of the Government the District Commissioner had the duty of consulting the Council and assembled chiefs on the draft Tribal Land Bill and later announcing the formation of the District Development Committee. He urged the introduction of beer bye-laws (on the grounds that Francistown Town Council had already adopted them), intervened successfully in the debate on the location of the District clinic² and approved of the decision to go ahead with the consideration of applications for building (shops) on State Land, despite earlier criticism.³ His advice to a committee considering applications for the post of Senior Revenue Officer/Education Secretary was however rejected:

The postponement of the applications did not satisfy the District Commissioner as the Adviser of the Council which apparently arouse [sic] dispute between the members of the Committee and the District Commissioner.

Decision

The final decision of the Committee was postponement of the meeting . . . to reconsider the applications.⁴

1 NEDC Minutes, 17-18 JUN 71

2 Ibid., 26 APR 68, 22 DEC 71, 9 APR 69, 10 MAR 71

3 Licensing Authority Minutes, 28 SEP 73; NEDC Minutes, 23-24 AUG 73 (original version).

4 Finance Committee Report to Council meeting of 6 FEB 69 which endorsed the decision.

This rebuff was not unique, being forshadowed by the stormy meeting at which the District Commissioner's refusal to recognise the newly-elected Council Chairman was rejected as "irrelevant" by the Council,¹ and the reaction by BPP Councillors to the District Commissioner's speech at the opening meeting of the Second Session, from which this extract is taken:

In his brief speech, the District Commissioner said, he was happy to meet all the Councillors and hoped that they were going to work harmoniously without Party differences as was the case during their [1969 election] campaign. He was again stressing on the point that, it was important and potential task as a councillor to work the people for the people. He further made them realise that when they entered the Council Chamber, their party differences were left outside but just to discuss thoughts of progress. He said to them, as you are here, it is your duty to elect a Chairman not because he belonged to a certain party.

. . . Some Members Leave the House: Some members stood up to question why the majority of the [unsuccessful] Botswana Democratic Party Candidates were nominated as Councillors and declined that they were not going to take part in the elections of Vice and Chairman. After some comments and questions by all members, five firmly stood against seven and unceremoniously walked out of the Chamber. The elections carried on because the remaining members formed a quorum.²

Most of the time however the District Commissioner was involved in taking action (with the Council Secretary) in pursuance of Council decisions, such as the problem of getting gates opened (which involved international law as the location was on the Rhodesian border), surveying the population on State Land to see if it justified its own school, investigating the position of "deserted farms", or accompanying the Secretary in a tour of the District to talk to the people about Local Government tax and matimela problems.³

1 See above, p. 211

2 NEDC Minutes, 25-26 NOV 69

3 NEDC Minutes, 21-23 JUN 72, 20-21 DEC 72, 25 APR 73

The advent of the District Development Committee system institutionalised much of the activity which had already become the established pattern in the Tati District as well as adding a fresh dimension.

Members of Parliament

Although the MP for Tati West, K. M. Nkhwa, whose constituency covers most of the District, had fairly close informal contacts with the BPP Councillors there was little formal contact between him or his Leader and MP for Francistown and Tati East (P. G. Matante) and the Council. The only documented case of Nkhwa's intervention came through a Parliamentary Question on the peri-urban "no-man's land" of Somerset West, where the issue was the payment of fees for children attending schools in Francistown proper. This was the subject of a note by the Minister of Local Government and Lands and correspondence between the Ministry and the Council.¹ (The immediate problem was satisfactorily resolved but the ultimate solution was the transfer of Somerset West to Francistown.)

Nkhwa's question was on his own initiative rather than at Council's request; the only instance of the latter was the unusual decision to ask a member of the House of Chiefs, Councillor Chief Ramokate, to raise an issue in that body, which technically is not part of Parliament, but has established the right to question Ministers and debate general questions.²

1 NEDC Minutes, 22 DEC 71 (marginal note); ibid., 22-23 MAR 72.

2 Ibid., 30 JAN 68; see J. H. Proctor, "The House of Chiefs and the Political Development of Botswana" Journal of Modern African Studies, VI, 1, (1968), pp. 69 ff

Foreign Donors

The obviously pressing problems of the North East combined with its relatively manageable size and accessibility¹ to make it a magnet for aid from overseas, involving principally the Botswana Christian Council, the United States Embassy, the School Partnership Programme and the World Food Programme. With one or two exceptions² the Council did not actively initiate requests for aid, but rather responded to explicit offers of assistance, such as sums of money for emergency water supplies from the Botswana Christian Council or from the United States Embassy Self-Help fund for school building.³ Water was the problem which most aid aimed to alleviate, followed by school building and health projects.

Even though aid was, in general, very welcome it gave rise to a number of conflicts. These were not the result of the strings attached - although on one occasion Councillors actually refused to take up an offer until they could see how it would fit into the Council's embryo Development Plan - so much as personality clashes and administrative inefficiencies. Delays in submitting project memoranda resulted in delays ranging from three months on water projects to over a year for a classroom building project.⁴ The greatest amount of friction arose over aid personnel and their relations with the permanent Council Staff, culminating in a decision by the Council:

. . . that they will rather require an old and more experienced water engineer and that the present Council Adviser need no replacement.⁵

1 In comparison with the more poverty stricken but remote Kgalagadi District, for instance.

2 These being requests to the International Planned Parenthood Federation for two nurses, and an application to the Christian Council for fruit trees and help with water supplies, NEDC Minutes 11 SEP 70, and 23-24 AUG 73.

3 Ibid., 22 DEC 70, 7 JUL 69

4 Ibid., 22 DEC 70, 10 MAR 71, 21-23 JUN 72, 20-23 SEP 72, 23-24 AUG 73

5 Ibid., 8 APR 70

On the side of the donors, the report commissioned by the Botswana Christian Council, reacting to the poor working relationship with the Council Secretary, recommended that

In the particularly sensitive field of personnel assistance . . . no benefits at all can be envisaged from further support [for] this District Council.¹

When the District Development Committee system was set up, however, the expatriate CUSO volunteer District Officer (Development) and DDC Secretary managed to achieve a better working relationship with the Council Secretary and the newly-appointed Council Development Officer.

THE NORTH EAST DISTRICT AS POLITICAL ARENA

The Ethnic Factor

The "Kalanga question" undoubtedly exists in the mind of Tswana politicians. But the language question, raised in Parliament by MPs from the North East and Central Districts,² was mentioned only once in the Council,³ when it was noted that compulsory Setswana in school examinations disadvantaged non-native speakers, which category included the bulk of the North Eastern population. The fact that many uneducated Kalangas were less than fluent in Setswana meant that Radio Botswana, reception of which was difficult enough in the area, was not listened to very much, and instead the Shona service⁴ of Radio Rhodesia had a much larger audience.⁵

1 Flood, op. cit., p. 241

2 See Hansard, 14, pp. 184 ff (13-14 JUL 66); and p. 381 below.

3 NEDC Minutes, 22-23 MAR 72

4 Kalanga and Shona are mutually comprehensible.

5 The effect of this can be noted from the virtual absence of participation from the North East in the Radio Learning Campaign mounted by the University's Division of Extra Mural Services. (Radio Learning Campaign files).

There was one minor ethnic problem that concerned the Council and this was the Mazezuru Community, who on religious grounds were opposed to allowing their children to attend local schools. A series of discussions was held in which the Council achieved a measure of success.¹ But relations on the whole were amicable and Councillors paid tribute to the disproportionate contribution to self-help made by Mazezuru.²

The major ethnic problem however was undoubtedly one of relations between the white farmers (and the Tati Company) and the local African farmers or would-be farmers. At almost every meeting of the Council between January 1968 and September 1969 complaints were made about the treatment of Africans by Europeans in the freehold area. Repeatedly strong protests were made about evictions (often at very short notice), arbitrary "fines" charged for cattle trespassing and the closure of rights of way with fences. An investigation was ordered into reports of humiliation suffered at the hands of European farmers; in short, relations were bad.³ Undoubtedly this continuing friction was the factor which precipitated the sudden announcement by the President, during the 1969 election campaign, of the nationalisation of Tati Company Land - an announcement the implications of which were still being worked out years later.⁴

Elections

For the psephologist studying Botswana the North East District has the unique advantage that no candidate has ever been returned

1 NEDC Minutes, 20-21 DEC 72, 26-27 FEB 73, 23-24 MAY 73

2 Ibid., 20-21 DEC 72

3 Ibid., 22-23 MAR 72, 20-22 FEB 74

4 See above, pp. 205-206

unopposed, enabling precise comparisons to be made in all polling districts between the 1966, 1969 and 1974 elections (the position being complicated only by the transfer of the Somerset West suburb to Francistown in the 1974 election). For Parliamentary elections the North East is however divided between the Tati West constituency (renamed North East in 1974), which covers more than half the District, and the constituency of Francistown & Tati East (renamed Francistown in 1974) which covers the remainder of the North East District as well as Francistown; together the two constituencies comprise the Tati District. These caveats notwithstanding, the trends are quite clearly discernible. Table 5.1 tells the story of BPP success at the polls for the North East District Council, with Francistown Town Council shown in Table 5.2 for comparison.

TABLE 5.1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS: NORTH EAST DISTRICT COUNCIL
Seats won (number of candidates in brackets)

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BPP	4(7)	5(7)	5(7)
BDP	2(7)	2(7)	2(7)
Ind	1(2)	-	-
BNF	-	0(1)	-
<u>Total</u>	7(16)	7(15)	7(14)

TABLE 5.2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS: FRANCISTOWN TOWN COUNCIL
Seats won (number of candidates in brackets)

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BPP	6(8)	6(8)	4(8)
BDP	2(8)	2(8)	5(9)*
Ind.	0(1)	-	-
<u>Total</u>	8(17)	8(16)	9(17)

* One BDP candidate returned unopposed

To amplify these figures, Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show the share of the vote secured by the contesting parties in the North East District and Tati District as a whole respectively.

TABLE 5.3

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS: NORTH EAST DISTRICT COUNCIL
Share of the votes cast (percentage)

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BPP	58.2	63.1	51.6
BDP	30.4	36.0	48.4
Others	11.3	0.9	-

Swing: 1966-69: +0.35 (i.e. to BDP)

TABLE 5.4

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS:
NORTH EAST DISTRICT COUNCIL + FRANCISTOWN TOWN COUNCIL
Share of the votes cast (percentage)

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BPP	65.2	63.2	53.7
BDP	27.8	36.3	46.3
Others	7.0	0.6	-

Swing: 1966-69: +5.4

It is not possible to calculate a precise swing on the basis of the 1974 election owing to boundary changes and one uncontested seat in Francistown but clearly the BDP improved its position very substantially in 1974 everywhere in the Tati District.

The same story is true of the Parliamentary elections, which demonstrates that it was the national standing of the parties rather than their performance in the Council that was the determining factor in voters' behaviour, with the reservation that the BPP vote in the District Council election in 1969 and 1974 was slightly higher (by 0.8% to 1.4%, i.e. approximately 1%) than the estimated vote it received in

the rural part of the Tati District in the Parliamentary elections.

The tables which follow (5.5, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8) are self-explanatory.

TABLE 5.5

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS:
TATI WEST (1965, 1969)/NORTH EAST CONSTITUENCY (1974)
Parties' share of the vote (percentage)

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BPP	51.6	59.4	51.5
BDP	26.1	37.7	48.5
Ind.	20.3	-	-
BNF	-	2.9	-
BIP	2.0	-	-

Swing: 1965-69: +1.9%

TABLE 5.6

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS:
FRANCISTOWN AND TATI EAST (1965, 1969)/FRANCISTOWN CONSTITUENCY (1974)
Parties' share of the vote (percentage)

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BPP	77.3	65.1	52.6
BDP	21.2	34.9	47.4
BIP	1.5	-	-

Swing: 1965-69: +13.0%

TABLE 5.7

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: TATI DISTRICT
Parties' share of the vote (percentage)

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1974</u>
BPP	66.9	62.7	51.9
BDP	23.2	36.1	48.1
BIP	1.7	-	-
BNF	-	1.2	-
Ind.	8.2	-	-

Swings: 1965-69: + 8.55%

1969-74: +11.4 %

1965-74: +19.95%

TABLE 5.8
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 1969: ESTIMATE FOR NORTH EAST DISTRICT
Parties' share of votes (percentage)

BPP	62.3
BDP	35.7
BNF	2.0

To complete the data, the one by-election which occurred for the North East District Council took place on 1 FEB 67 in the BPP-held ward of Tshesebe East.¹ The result of the straight fight, a BPP majority of 39.8%, indicates the peak of People's Party support in that ward. The successful candidate subsequently crossed the carpet to the BDP and lost his seat heavily at the 1969 election, albeit with a slightly better result than average (in terms of swing) for BDP candidates. This is the only evidence of a personal vote, whereas the example of Chief Ramokate's spectacular failure² in his home ward when standing as a BDP candidate in 1969 gives some indication of the primacy of party (and the irrelevance, certainly in this District, of aristocratic birth) in determining voting behaviour. There was no obvious factor to account for variations in voting pattern from ward to ward within the general picture.

Parties and Policies

Much of the analysis of the business of the North East District Council has been concerned with identifying the impact of party as a factor. It has been found that Councillors in the North East resemble their counterparts elsewhere (the Southern District Council in Session II being particularly relevant for purposes of comparison) in being concerned as party members with the holding of office in the Council, and as

1 Ministry of Local Government & Lands By-election file. Government Gazette, V, No. 8.

2 He received 15.8% of the votes, in a straight fight with the incumbent BPP Councillor.

individuals in agreeing to a consensus on a substantial range of issues, but particularly regarding relations between the Council as a whole and outside bodies. But the North East differs from the Southern District (in its two-party phase) in the very definite inter-party cleavage on a number of policy matters.

The policy divisions were most marked on the problem of small settlements where the BDP favoured village grouping and were prepared to contemplate closing down "uneconomic" schools and were strongly opposed by the BPP, who take seriously their party title as champion of the people.¹ This is brought out also by the clashes over licensing hawkers and permitting commercial development on the later acquisitions of State Land. Other sharp differences occurred over the siting of a dam, over compensation, and over relations between freehold farmers and their neighbours in the communal areas.

Yet the consensus is also striking. There was unanimous condemnation of some of the objectionable actions of the Tati Company and certain European farmers, and a similar lack of party-based cleavage on the provision of amenities and social services in general and their location. More remarkable the BDP Councillors were almost as critical of the Chiefs'/Headmen's administration of matimela as were the BPP, and this foreshadowed the switch in Government policy away from nominating traditional leaders to the Council.²

Even in the sphere of committee elections the North East Councillors operated a system of co-operation to the extent that no Councillors were excluded from committees, even if the BDP held almost all the

1 Some BPP Councillors however were converted to the principle of village grouping but insisted that it be purely voluntary; others remained hostile to the whole idea.

2 In the Second Session there was only one such appointment - and he was a defeated BDP candidate.

Committee convenerships. The periods when the BDP monopolised certain bodies (Licensing Authority and Land Board) were ended after BPP criticism by the inclusion of at least one non-BDP member. This does not disprove the theory of a North East District oligarchy, but it does indicate a willingness to share committee positions.

Caucussing was more intense than elsewhere and did not occur only before elections but was a regular feature.¹ This degree of party organisation culminated in the election of a BPP Councillor as Chairman for a short spell, and the later election of a disgruntled (and none too effective) BDP Councillor who (with impunity) defied the party caucus. These BPP manoeuvres to split the ruling party were matched by the enticing of a BPP Councillor to cross the carpet, where he joined the former Independent in supporting the Democratic Party.

If, as has been implied, the BPP made much of the running on policy matters (based on their moral authority as the victors at the polls) and displayed a relatively high degree of ideological consistency, the question that arises is why they lost support between the 1969 and 1974 Local Government Elections. The answer is probably an amalgam of two factors perceived by the public: their unimpressive leadership and lack of credibility as a national party; and the impracticability of trying to elect a BPP Council, given the implacable opposition of the Government to such an eventuality.

The Council and the People

It has been widely recognised that the role of the District Councils which were introduced in 1966 has yet to be fully understood by the bulk of the people and this communications gap has been referred

¹ The District Officer reported frequent use of Council meeting rooms by the BPP (MIG&L, note from Principal B to Principal A, 21 APR 69)

to on a number of occasions. One attempt to get through to the people was the decision to admit the press (which is ironic, since public access to Council meetings is automatic unless Councils decide otherwise for specific items),¹ and years later the Council expressed concern at the lack of coverage it received on Radio Botswana.² That this breakdown of communications was not however entirely the fault of the media is brought out in the following extracts:

1970 The Chairman brought to the notice of the Council that he had got complaints from the public that some members of the Council did not even take an interest in acquainting their wards they stand for with Council dealings. The chairman was commenting in brief the importance of members visiting their wards, receiving their complaints and also reporting back Council proceedings.³

1972 The District Commissioner . . . informed Council that members of the public were complaining that their Councillors do not visit them regularly to hear and take their complaints to Council.

Commenting on the complaints, most of the Councillors indicated that members of the public were to blame because the people themselves refuse to turn up for meetings.

Resolved: Council resolved that Councillors, accompanied by an officer from the District Commissioner's office should visit areas in the district and encourage people to attend meetings, and that the people should be addressed by both Councillors, Government Officers and Council Staff.⁴

1 NEDC Minutes, 28 AUG 67; Model Standing Orders, S.O. 16.

2 NEDC Minutes, 20-21 DEC 72

3 Ibid., 8 APR 70

4 Ibid., 21-23 JUN 72

PART II

THE GRASSROOTS

CHAPTER 6

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

Village Development Committees (VDCs) have become¹ a basic institution in Government thinking, forming the foundation of the "democratic pyramid" idea frequently used by Government spokesmen. The official VDC Handbook puts it this way:

Decisions in a democracy are taken by you, in your village as well as by the Government in Gaborone and by the District Council. . . .
. . . the VDC represents the interests of the village as a whole. At the same time it is part of the whole Government system - indeed the most important part of Government machinery at village level.²

Still it is possible to overstress the importance of VDCs. Despite statements to the effect that "it was one of the set government proposals that every village that had a school had to have a Village Development Committee,"³ many villages had none, or at least experienced considerable periods with no functioning VDC. Nor does this mean that such villages have experienced no development at all during such periods, or that they have no voice or no way of having their interests represented. As non-statutory bodies, VDCs are purely voluntary organisations and their

1 Since their original ad hoc establishment to cope with the needs of a famine/drought relief programme, just before independence.

2 Botswana Extension College, Village Development Committee Handbook (final draft) (1974). pp. 3, 4

3 Statement by a Community Development Assistant. Mapoka VDC Minutes (meeting at Nlapkwane), 28 AUG 71

function and standing in their particular villages are determined by a number of factors, historical, social, geographical, economic and political.

Some studies have been undertaken of the political workings of individual villages, and equally some aggregate data has also been compiled.¹ But the former where compiled in depth gives a series of unrelated case studies, while the latter, being derived from the filling-in of questionnaires by VDC office-bearers, lacked confirmation through systematic interviews and cross-checking with other information available. In an attempt to produce valid findings about a fair sample of villages, therefore, three villages were selected from each of the three districts chosen for study, but with the important proviso that the VDC minute book should be not only extant but available. What follows, then, is derived from extensive interviews and the written record of nine villages: three groups of three each. They are: in the North East District, Mapoka, Masunga and Tsamaya; in the Central District (Mahalapye area), Kalamare, Mahalapye and Makwate; in the Southern District, Digawana, Good Hope and Molapowabojang.

One fact to emerge can be disposed of early. This is the rather surprisingly low degree of overlap in the various records kept - surprising because of the relatively small size of the areas involved and therefore the consequence that the number of physical developments which occurred or were mooted was of manageable proportions. In most cases a complete record of projects could be compiled by collating the information lying in various administrators' files,² but it was clearly a much-needed reform

¹ These are reviewed later in this chapter.

² But note the following remarks: "Some of the completed projects do not appear in this report because their records could not be found anywhere in this office" (prefaced to a Community Development Report on "North East District. Self-Help Projects since 1966-1972")

to combine this into one format and the District Development Committee and planning procedures which have now become an established feature of local administration in Botswana had yet to make their impact in the period under review. But in any case what is essayed here is not a comprehensive catalogue of development projects but an analysis of the processes at work, both within the village community (i.e. horizontally) and (vertically) between the village and the district or indeed national level. The VDC is at the intersection of these two sets of relations.

VDCs: CONSTITUTION AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION

One searches in vain for a "model" constitution of VDCs, although certain features are generally accepted in official thinking as fundamental. But the "unwritten constitution" of each VDC is an individual one and will emerge later in this chapter from a study of the relationships in practice between various organisations. Nevertheless a useful start can be made by citing three semi-official statements of the role of VDCs.

The Village Development Handbook (drafted at the end of the period under review), answering the question, "What is a VDC?", states:

A Village Development Committee is a committee set up by a village to help develop it. Members are elected at a kgotla meeting. Anyone living in the village can vote at the meeting or become a member of the VDC. The aim of the VDC is to improve the village for the benefit of all the people living in it. A VDC is not controlled by any political party and it cannot force anyone to do what he does not want to do. But the VDC is not powerless. It can call for help from everyone living in the village to help with projects.

.....
This is the VDC's job:

It finds out what the needs of the village are and discusses them.

It lists those in order of importance so that the most urgent come at the top of the list.

.....¹
It reports back to kgotla on what it has done each year.

¹ Botswana Extension College, Village Development Committee Handbook (op. cit.), p. 4. The draft was approved by the Minister of Local Government & Lands.

An example of the guidelines given by Community Development Field Staff is the following, taken from the inaugural meeting of the Good Hope VDC:

- (a) wide development with prior consideration of important things - like schools, roads, clinics and hospitals. The people would be notified of any developments at general meetings.
- (b) to lead people in different allocations of work.
- (c) the members should set an example and should not unofficially disclose any information regarding the Committee's decisions. Should know that unity is strength and should, in their unity, centre all their minds to the up-keep of Good Hope's developments.

An even fuller exposition was given at the launching of the Tsamaya VDC by the Assistant Community Development Officer:

He then described the functions of the VDC as briefly summed below.

- (1) That the VDC's duties are associated with the general development of the village.
- (2) That it is the eye of the village.
- (3) That it handles, accounts for all village funds.
- (4) That it plans beforehand all development projects for the village - which thing was done by a headman by himself, and that the Government now chose a particular Committee to do those projects and that the Headman was an ordinary member of the Committee. Here instead of the individual decision of a Headman the vote decided the validity and rigidity of the members.
- (5) That all committee meetings could only be held at other places rather than Kgotla. That the Chairman and the secretary came to the Kgotla through the headman to say out its decisions subject to majority approval.
- (6) That such committees have not come to take the powers of Chiefs, Headmen etc. only as far as court cases were concerned - that trial cases were the responsibility of Headmen.

Routine Duties

That such committees should meet regularly right through the year about fortnightly to:-

- (1) To plan for the forthcoming year i.e. with special regards to classrooms, roads etc. and have and be governed by the time factor in carrying out proposed projects.
- (2) That all desired materials must be ready before the proposed projects are undertaken; and emphasised that planning was important.

- (3) That where the PTA exists it is there to advise the VDC on other school developments though it is concerned with sports etc..¹

Various theories of the VDC's function were propounded by VDCs themselves. The main lines of thought were, firstly, that the VDC was the leading organisation in the village - the executive of the kgotla (thus kgotla meetings called at the VDC's request were sometimes referred to as general meetings² as opposed to "executive" meetings³), the umbrella organisation to which all others were subordinate. This interpretation was expressed by speakers at one meeting, opposing the proposal of a member of the traditional administration to refer a problem to the Chief. One argued that "we are authorised for the whole village and thus everything should reach us first and then be passed on," while another stated: "the progressive approach is that the VDC should take decisions and convey its minutes to the Chief and the MP. The Chief, MP and Councillors have nothing to do with it."⁴

An alternative view was that the VDC was merely one club or movement amongst several concerned with development, and one VDC went so far as to refer to these other organisations as other "development committees" of the village.⁵ This approach is more marked in the earlier-formed Committees which were organised during the big Food-for-Work programme;⁶ one VDC⁷ indeed retained the name "I.C.D. Committee" (Ipelegeng Community Development Committee) from 1967 to 1969.

1 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 16 APR 70 (emphasis in the original)

2 Mapoka VDC Minutes, 12 NOV 70

3 Ibid., 24 JUL 71

4 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 10 JUL 70

5 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 22 MAR 72

6 See Central District Council Minutes, 5-6 JUL 66

7 Kalamare

Composition

One of the few features common to all VDCs is that they are elected¹ at kgotla meetings and that they have the usual officebearers - Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary (and often Assistant Secretary). The frequency of election varies from once a year to just once; and the turnover of members is generally rather low and mainly by the choice of the member concerned. The total membership varies widely, from eight to over twenty. Likewise the number of ex officio members, although always including the Headman, may stop at him but, in most cases, includes the local Councillor(s) and the Community Development Assistant (CDA). Others who feature in some are Head Teachers, MPs, Agricultural Demonstrators, the District Officer, PTA chairmen, and sometimes representatives of other organisations. In some cases several members of the traditional administration were members, up to a maximum of ten in one village. Moreover the number of members varied over time.

Although the committees were all elected, there were two interesting variants on the electoral process. In one village the unsuccessful candidates for the ordinary membership became alternates or reserves, but were entitled "co-opted members" and thus qualified to be listed as "members"; this unusual system was the legacy of the CDA who established the Mapoka VDC. In Kalamare the committee was suddenly augmented (at election time) by the addition of four members designated "MP's nominees".² The one VDC election which the writer actually witnessed (at the North Eastern village of Mosojane) is recorded in Appendix C; the variations in composition are to be found later in the chapter.

1 This can of course be by acclamation rather than by voting.

2 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 4 DEC 69

Modus Operandi

The minutes of the VDCs vary as widely as their composition. The only features which are found virtually without exception are the recording of the date of the meeting and the names of the member leading devotions (which always occurred at the beginning of the meeting and frequently at the close). This latter feature has two explanations: the strength of the Christian tradition in Botswana (a predominantly Christian nation)¹ and the desire for a degree of formality in deciding when to open a meeting. Otherwise formality in the sense of European committee procedure is very much the exception² (save for the practice of addressing the chair).

Minutes were written in English in two villages,³ in Kalanga in two,⁴ and in Setswana in the remainder. Frequently the minutes were read out (and less frequently confirmed or corrected) at the following meeting, but by no means always. Similarly reference to "matters arising" and the use of an agenda were the exception rather than the rule. Thus, apart from financial statements, which were commonly given in the form of "expenditure to date and balance in hand," the ethos of the VDC was the ethos of the kgotla, manifested in the necessity to allow everyone to have their say and then attempt to reach consensus.

1 This is not inappropriate, given that the creation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate owed much to Livingstone and other Christian missionaries. The Church of Livingstone, the LMS (London Missionary Society) Church, now known as the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, is the largest denomination in the country. In addition there are now many independent churches.

2 In the ten minute books studied there was only one reference to proposing and seconding a motion (where a motion "fell for lack of a seconder"): Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 5 MAR 71

3 Kalamare and Tsamaya

4 Mapoka and Masunga

While this approach may not always be conducive towards snappy decision-making, it does provide much invaluable insight into the working of the committees.

Some committees, faced with the problem of reconciling the lengthy discursive nature of the committee with the need for action, resorted to the creation of sub-committees, either ad hoc or "executive" (but usually called by some other name such as "emergency committee,"² "working committee" or "caretaker committee".³ In most cases however executive functions were performed by leading lights on the committee, including Chairmen, Councillors, Secretaries, Treasurers, Headmen, CDAs, et al., who typically reported back to and sought retrospective approval from the Committee.

One of the major problems encountered by VDCs was that of attendance at meetings. There are two aspects of the problem: one is the low turnout at meetings which actually take place which, for VDCs where attendance was listed, averaged around 58%.⁴ The following extracts bring out the problem. "It was just a general complaint of these members absenting themselves. So nothing was done . . .";⁵ "A very poor attendance and nothing much was said";⁶ "Of the 18 VDC members I know only six. Even of the six only about four attended meetings. Meetings were a flop."⁷

1 E.g. for fund-raising: Kalamare VDC Minutes, 16 OCT 68

2 Ibid., 4 DEC 69

3 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 20 JAN 71

4 This confirms the Findings of a survey conducted by the Botswana Extension College, which found a mean attendance of 60%. (A. Etherington, Villagers as developers - I), p. 4. BEC's figures on attendance of councillors and CDAs (40% and 30% respectively) also confirm the writer's findings.

5 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 19 FEB 68

6 Molapowabojang VDC Minutes, 11 AUG 71

7 CDA (Mookane area), Report on Community Development Work, May 1969 - referring to Makwate VDC

Some VDCs attempted to deal with non-attendance in formal ways: requiring apologies for absence,¹ writing to absent members,² or reducing the quorum to the two principal officebearers.³ One Committee resolved to debar members absenting themselves three times in a row,⁴ while another decided to fine members R2 (over £1) for non-attendance.⁵ The same solution was suggested in another VDC but rejected after a lengthy discussion, which was clinched when one member pointed out that "the people you complain about are not here!"⁶ Clearly there was no one solution to this perennial problem.

A related aspect is the frequency of meetings. Four VDCs set a target of weekly⁷ or fortnightly⁸ meetings, but none came anywhere near achieving this norm; in fact the best average achieved was one meeting every three weeks.⁹ Nevertheless the idea of a fortnightly (or better) norm was reflected in a survey administered at a series of VDC training conferences, half of the answers to the question also claimed that there was no significant seasonal variation.¹⁰ Since a majority of VDC members are farmers this finding was surprising and turns out to be an example of the "halo effect". From the records of the ten VDCs studied it emerges

1 Mahalapye South VDC Minutes, 29 MAR 73

2 Good Hope VDC Minutes, 24 AUG 70

3 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 3 MAR 69

4 *Ibid.*, 4 DEC 69. This follows the District Council Standing Orders and was suggested by the newly-elected councillor.

5 Molapowabojang VDC Minutes, 18 OCT 72

6 Mahalapye South VDC Minutes, 21 JUL 73

7 *Ibid.*, 29 MAR 73; Good Hope VDC Minutes, 24 AUG 70; Kalamare VDC Minutes, 23 OCT 68 and 21 JUN 72

8 *Ibid.*, 4 DEC 69; Makwate VDC Minutes, 16 SEP 72

9 By Molapowabojang VDC

10 Etherington, Villagers as developers - I (*op. cit.*, hereinafter referred to as "Etherington - I" etc.) pp. 4, 6

that the average interval between meetings was 40 days (i.e. just over nine meetings per annum) but that the seasonal variations,¹ as demonstrated in Figure 6.1, are a very prominent feature indeed. Confirmation of this is given in reports by Community Development field staff.²

Finance

Village Development Committees' concern about attendances was rivalled by their preoccupation with money, since in practice the number of projects which do not require a cash input is very limited.³ In addition there were very often strings attached to Council support (in materials or money) for a project, taking the form of an assumed/required community contribution expressed as a certain sum of money.⁴ Most VDCs however opted to hire builders, buy locally made bricks, etc. rather than organise construction projects themselves, and this inevitably forced them to raise more money to pay for this method;⁵ the most sophisticated example of deficit financing was a loan of R3,000 negotiated by the large Mahalapye VDC from a bank.⁶

It is difficult to give a definitive estimate of the amount of money handled by a typical VDC, owing to the emphasis (where financial

1 One VDC discussed the problems attendant on the phaladi (scattering of the people): Digawana VDC Minutes, 20 MAR 71

2 E.g. "The two sub-committees [Mahalapye North and South] have not met from 8th March to 30th June 1972, the reasons been given is the members who were still at the lands [=fields]": CDA (Mahalapye), Quarterly Report - Second Quarter 1972.

3 Recognised by the Botswana Extension College Village Development Handbook, op. cit., p. 14.

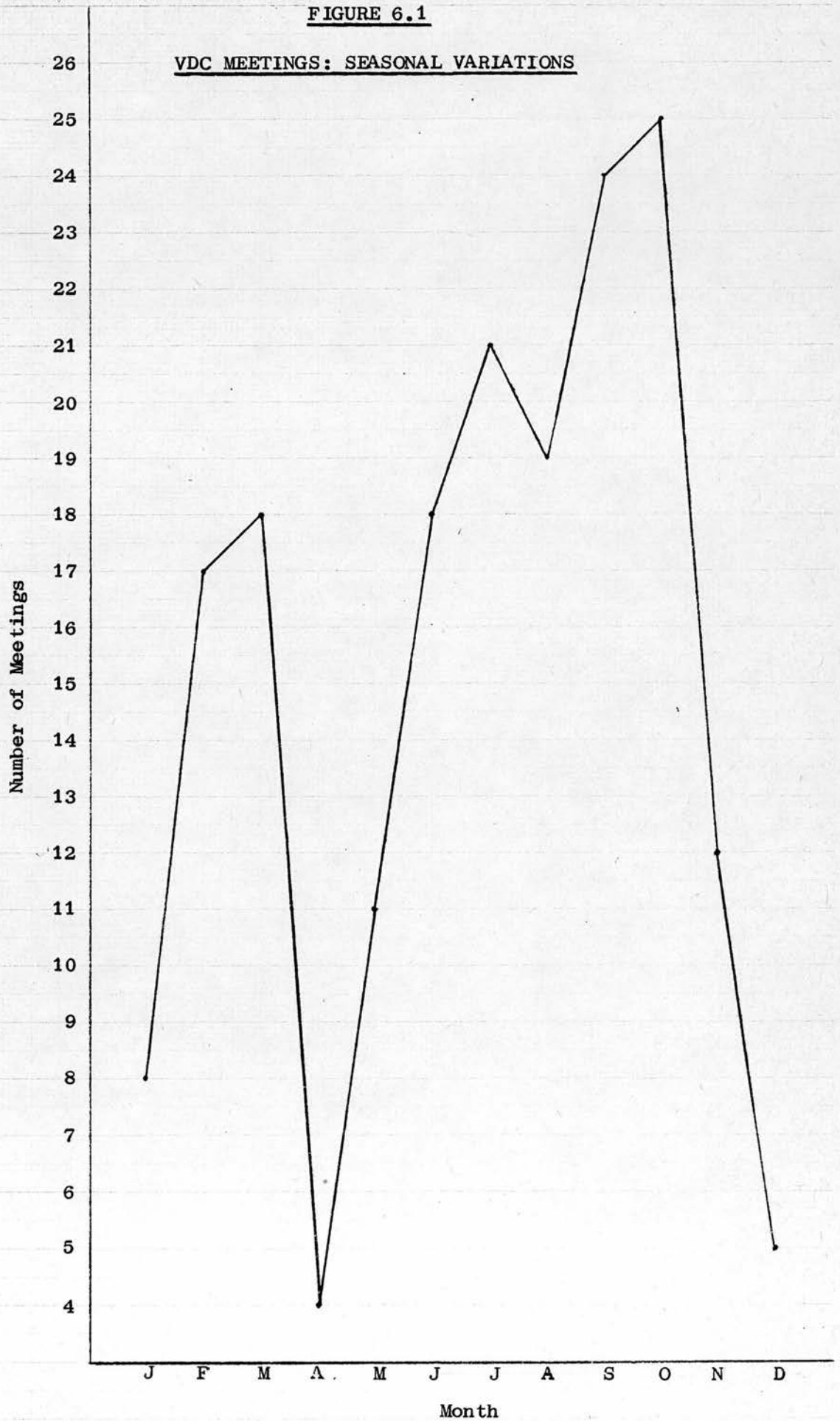
4 E.g. a Central District Council offer of R600 provided the village put up R193 in cash or kind: Makwate VDC Minutes, 14 OCT 72

5 Some VDCs indeed went into the red owing to this practice: Digawana VDC Minutes, 1 FEB 72; Molapowabojang VDC Minutes, 21 JUN 72

6 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 12 OCT 71

FIGURE 6.1

VDC MEETINGS: SEASONAL VARIATIONS



reports are regularly given) on the balance in hand rather than annual statements. But (leaving aside the high finance of the Mahalapye Community Centre),¹ the identifiable annual turnover varied from very small sums (well under R100) through R509² to R722³ in particular cases. (The de facto population of the last two villages is respectively 2,715 and 912.) Figures given⁴ for the Central District in 1968 (with 66 VDCs in operation) were as follows:

Total contribution in cash

- (a) By villages: R18,564
- (b) By Botswana Christian Council: R3,916
- (c) By Central District Council: R403
- (d) By School Partnership Programme: R5,712

Sources of funds varied from village to village. In addition to Council grants, the most favoured ways of raising money were per capita levies (varying from 10 cents⁵ per head to R3 for each employee;⁶ one VDC decided to charge R1 for men and R0.50 for women, then on reflection decided not to discriminate and made it 50c each);⁷ or subscriptions levied on each traditional ward. Two villages in the North East received substantial sums from émigrés working in South Africa, Rhodesia and towns in Botswana:⁸ a pattern found elsewhere in Africa but not encountered in the other villages in Botswana. One village received funds for various permits for parties, and also court fines.⁹ Functions such as concerts, fêtes or parties (at which the sale of beer and food

1 See pp. 306-307 below, and p. 193 above

2 CDA (Mapoka) Annual Report 1972 (This was the sum raised by the VDC itself.)

3 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 11 MAR 70

4 Community Development Department Annual Report: Central District Data, p. 1

5 Good Hope VDC Minutes, 21 FEB 72

6 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 2 JUL 70

7 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 11 MAR 70 and 1 APR 70

8 Mapoka VDC Minutes 19 FEB 71; Masunga VDC Minute Book, 3 OCT 71 and passim

9 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 16 AUG 72 and passim

were the main attraction) were also popular, although the amount of profit made was often rather small. Such occasions performed a useful social function and were sometimes combined with major events such as visits by a Minister to open classrooms.¹

All the effort put into fund-raising and self-help can be totally negated by corruption; indeed the mere suspicion that funds have been misappropriated can be sufficient to ruin a VDC's efforts and poison relationships within a village. Even a case of alleged embezzlement² unconnected with the VDC in one village cast a dark shadow over the committee's operations as all receipt books in the village were confiscated by the police. As will be shown in the latter part of this chapter memories of past irregularities in the handling of funds are long, the effects lasting over a decade. The number of cases of alleged or proven corruption is relatively small,³ and this is perhaps surprising given the fact that only 39% of VDCs in one survey kept their funds in a bank:

TABLE 6.2

<u>VDCs classified by method of storage of VDC funds</u> ⁴		
	N	%
Funds kept in a bank account	36	39
Funds kept with treasurer	31	34
Funds kept elsewhere	<u>25</u>	<u>27</u>
Total	92	100
No reply	2	

1 E.g. Mapoka VDC Minutes, 2 OCT 71; Kalamare VDC Minutes, 14 NOV 68. In 1970 four ministers attended a total of 20 such opening ceremonies in the Central District alone: Community Development Department, Central District - Region II, Annual Report for 1970, p. 6.

2 The accused was removed from the post of court clerk. Kalamare VDC Minutes, 1 AUG 73

3 Two examples from the Central District: "The VDC is unhappy about the headman's alleged lack of cooperation and sabotage. They reported that certain monies had been misappropriated by the headman." (Central District Council Secretary's Report: "Third Tour of the Central District: 9th November - 21st November 1972"); letter from Councillor Sekwate to Central District Council, Serowe, 19 MAR 72: "I'm instructed by Village Community Development [committee] to inform you that the chairman had used the community's funds to the amount of R226.69."

4 Source: Etherington - 1, p. 7

Planning

As might be expected from the informality which is characteristic of Village Development Committees, decisions on projects were not normally taken in a systematic way; as Curtis says, this may well gradually change as the impact of the establishment of district planning machinery comes to be felt at the village level.¹ There are instances of the systematic debate of priorities within the VDC² or at a kgotla meeting called at the VDC's request,³ but these are exceptional. A more typical pattern⁴ is a list of projects derived from ideas emanating from within the village and also suggestions from outside, either by a government field officer (e.g. the CDA) or as part of a District- or nation-wide plan (particularly the Food-for-Work, or Drought/Famine Relief schemes). This list is then added to by "emergency" requests (for repairs to teachers' houses, for instance); some projects are only partly implemented; the resultant dilemma is whether to persevere with unattractive projects or to abandon them in favour of new ones. The confusion is enhanced when implementation is in various hands - teachers' housing delegated to the Parent/Teacher Association, for instance - or the materials donated by the Council are damaged, used for other purposes or removed by the Council. Add to the picture vagueness in accounting for money,⁵ and the resultant process while certainly "rolling" can

1 D. Curtis, "Ideology and the Impact of Development Agency Activity," (1977), p. 139

2 Good Hope VDC Minutes, 30 JUL 70

3 "250 attended where development plans was presented by VDC, and accepted after detailed discussion, i.e. at Mahalapye." (Community Development Department, Central Regional Monthly Report, August 1968, p. 5)

4 Specific instances will be found below in the section on individual VDCs.

5 For an excellent study illustrating this see Curtis, op. cit., pp. 141-145.

hardly be described as "planning".

Leaving aside for the moment the question of projects originating from outside the village, there are evident within the VDCs two tendencies as regards project selection. One is the influence of the pattern established in the early days when villagers tended to think in terms of building programmes - the so-called "hard" projects such as schools and health facilities.¹ The other is the vested interests of teachers² and ex officio members, notably CDAs, in getting houses built or repaired for themselves or their colleagues. The fact that these bids for resources have usually succeeded indicates the legitimacy which attaches to offices such as theirs as much as the desire by villagers to have sufficient teaching staff for their children. The influence of other vested interests is more difficult to detect with certainty³ - they usually involve the precise location of various developments - but one generalisation that can safely be made is that VDC projects benefit those nearest the centre of the village most, and they normally include the ex officio members of the VDC and their relatives.

THE VDC AND OTHER FORCES IN THE VILLAGE

The reference to "other forces" in the village includes two apparently distinct categories: the ex officio members and other organisations. With regard to the former, it may appear paradoxical to classify them as "other" forces, yet their influence can very often

1 Recognised in Botswana Extension College, The Training of Village Development Committees, NOV 1976, p. 8

2 Teachers are often elected to the VDC as secretaries or as other officebearers; in some villages the Head Teacher was regarded as an ex officio member.

3 One example is the decision to build latrines at the kgotla; and (long term) tribal offices; Kalamare VDC Minutes, 20 MAY 70

be specifically identified, justifying the categorisation. The position of the "other organisations" is in fact comparable since in most villages there is representation on a de facto or de jure basis of these other organisations. The two categories thus converge. On the one hand the supposedly ex officio members were sometimes not regarded as members at all,¹ or complained that they were not informed about meetings and hence could not attend: this was true of headmen, councillors and Community Development Assistants alike.² (Before going on to discuss the contribution of councillors and CDAs it should be emphasised that what is being analysed here is their "horizontal" role, i.e. as members of the village community, rather than their "vertical" function as "brokers" or liaison personnel - which is the subject of a later examination.) On the other hand there is one instance of a village³ where the practice was to elect one delegate from each of the four organisations existing in the village - Farmers' Association, Parent/Teacher Association, Women's Club and Youth Organisation. In most villages however it just happened that there was overlapping membership, directly or through spouses.⁴

The District Councillor

Generalisation about the impact of councillors on VDCs is a hazardous enterprise - and can produce some rather surprising

1 E.g. in Makwate where the CDA reported that neither Headman nor Head Teacher was a member (the Councillor and CDA did not reside in the village); CDA (Mookane), Monthly Report, MAY 69. In Molapowabojang it was stated that the Agricultural Demonstrator and the Councillor ought to be/become members (VDC Minutes 14 SEP 71)

2 Examples, respectively: Masunga (VDC Minutes, 3 OCT 71), Tsamaya (VDC Minutes, 7 JUL 71); Digawana (VDC Minutes, 18 NOV 71) and Themashanga (CDA [Tsamaya] Annual Report 1972).

3 Masunga

4 The question of differentiation by gender is a profound subject in itself and is referred to below, pp. 283 and 315-316

results¹ - owing to the difficulty of isolating the relevant factors labelled "councillor", and the most meaningful conclusions have to be specific to a particular village, a particular councillor and a particular period.² One of the problems is that of estimating how frequently a councillor attends VDC meetings. One survey produced a figure of one-third of meetings attended by a councillor.³ This figure is higher than the number of recorded attendances in the villages in this study, which worked out at 21% (n = 41/193). The figure may underrepresent the position in that councillors may have attended some meetings without being mentioned in the minutes (few VDC minutes regularly recorded the names of those present); against this must be set the fact that, owing to the number of VDCs which had two councillors as ex officio members,⁴ the proportion of recorded attendances as against possible attendances was only 16%. These figures however cover a range from 83%⁵ to no attendances and are thus of dubious value, but clearly cast considerable doubt on the popular view that the VDCs are the councillor's power base from which to challenge the headman, or that he "controls" the VDC through the party.⁶

1 See Vengroff's conclusions on the amount of success achieved by VDCs defined by authority type. R. Vengroff "Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana" (1972), pp. 48-52.

2 For excellent examples see D. Curtis, op. cit., Chs. 5, 6. Other instances are contained in P. J. Rollings Village Development Committees in Totome (1974).

3 Etherington, - I (op. cit.), p. 11

4 Mapoka, Masunga and Tsamaya (after October 1969); Mahalapye (Central). In other cases (Molapowabojang after October 1969; Digawana; Makwate) the Councillor was non-resident.

5 Mahalapye South (after the 1970 by-election)

6 Vengroff, op. cit., p. 47. The question of party activity at the village level is discussed in the next chapter. See the Chambers & Feldman Report (1972), especially p. 187.

When councillors did attend meetings their suggestions were frequently adopted by the Committee - on such matters as teachers' housing in Mapoka; a pay rise for the village postman in Tsamaya; or raising a loan from the Parent/Teacher Association in Mahalapye South.¹ Councillors' status was underlined by their executive role, especially in Mapoka and Mahalapye (see following section for details) where they were much involved in the supervision of projects and ceremonies, banking, and the removal of bottlenecks in the supply of building materials. Councillors occasionally made loans or donations to VDCs or helped with transport.² They also accepted or were assigned responsibility for arranging the election of the VDC (and in one case also the PTA) in two villages.³

It is clear that councillors possessed considerable influence when they chose to exercise it; the relevant question perhaps is why some chose to do so while other did not. Some answers will emerge from consideration of each village in turn.

The Community Development Assistant⁴

While politicians tend to see the elected councillor as the leading light in activating or encouraging VDCs, the prevalent civil service view is that the task is much more likely to be accomplished by the trained professional, the Community Development Assistant.⁵ How influential, then, is the CDA?

1 Respective VDC Minutes: 15 OCT 70; 5 MAR 71; 29 MAR 73

2 See respective VDC Minutes: Masunga, 8 AUG 71; Molapowabojang 28 SEP 72; Ibid., 27 OCT 71 .

3 CDA (Mookane) Annual Report, 1971 [for Makwate VDC]; Kalamare VDC Minutes, 4 DEC 69; CDA (Kalamare) Monthly Report, NOV 70

4 Many CDAs have become Assistant Community Development Officers (ACDOs): the term "CDA" is employed as a convenient shorthand for all grades of Community Development personnel in the villages.

5 See Government Paper No. 1 (MAR 72), p. 20; Government Paper No. 2 of 1973, p. 15; and Chambers & Feldman, Report on Rural Development (1973), pp. 227-234. For a critique of the "social engineering" approach, see Curtis, op. cit., passim. See also P. G. L. Wass, "Community Development in Botswana" (1972), Part II passim.

The first interest of any new CDA is obviously her or his own housing. This question has featured in a number of villages. To be fair to the CDAs, they did not normally arrive and then set about organising the VDC to build them a house; it was usually understood that the CDA's right to accommodation imposed an obligation on the host village and/or the Community Development Department to provide one.¹ Nevertheless construction or renovation of CDA housing did entail the diversion of village resources (primarily labour, both skilled and unskilled) to house the Community Development worker, and occupied the attention of VDCs in four villages.²

CDAs further successfully suggested building classrooms and roofing teachers' houses.³ But the limits to the influence CDAs possessed in deciding priorities (as opposed to their liaison role with their Department or the Council) are clearly seen in the rejection of a move to set up a "projects committee"⁴ and the angry reception given to the CDA's criticism of the VDC's priorities as indicated in the following extract:

The CDA complained of recklessness of building [with] the tribe's money. This topic rose [sic] a long argument and misunderstanding. The acting Chairman pointed out that this should not be discussed in the Special meeting but in our general meeting. The meeting was closed.⁵

It is not all that surprising that CDAs' opinions were less influential than those of councillors, since the former were almost

1 Materials were often made available by the Community Development Department for the "right" kind of projects.

2 Mapoka VDC Minutes, 8 MAY 71; Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 17 JAN 73; Kalamare VDC Minutes, 16 OCT 68, 20 AUG 69, 26 NOV 69, 3 JUN 76, 24 MAR 71; Community Development Department (Serowe), Central District: Region II: Annual Development Plan for 1969.

3 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 11 OCT 68, 24 MAR 71

4 Ibid., 18 OCT 72

5 Ibid., 20 OCT 70 (The matter was never reopened. Earlier criticism by the same CDA had been ignored: ibid., 15 JUL 70.)

invariably younger than the average age of VDC members, and in addition many were women (who were a minority on all VDCs);¹ in two of the most active VDCs (Mapoka and Mahalapye Central) the CDA's views did not figure at all.

When it came to prodding VDCs into action, however, CDAs were much more successful. One village greeted a new CDA as "our leader"² - a title which was analogous to that of "project leader" under the Food-for-Work scheme. In this capacity Community Development personnel were able to get VDCs to decide on projects for Food-for-Work workers³ and simply to have meetings.⁴ But the most important aspect of this sort of activity was the holding of elections. Almost all VDCs were either formed by a CDA⁵ or were addressed by Community Development personnel immediately after their formation.⁶ In pursuance of one of their primary duties CDAs initiated reëlections, where these had not taken place, in several villages.⁷

The other principal function performed by CDAs was executive - reporting on the progress of a project, accounting for money, convening meetings of village organisations, all at the respective VDC's request.⁸

The combination of a low degree of influence on the content of decisions - accentuated by a level of attendance/participation only

1 13% according to Etherington - II, op. cit., p.2

2 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 31 OCT 67

3 Digawana VDC Minutes, 14 JAN 71

4 Ibid., 18 NOV 71, 1 FEB 72; CDA (Kalamare) Report, AUG-DEC 69

5 E.g. "I formed a development committee in June": CDA (Mahalapye), Monthly Report, JUN 68

6 E.g. Good Hope VDC Minutes, 30 JUL 70, 6 AUG 70; Tsamaya VDC Minutes 18 APR 70

7 Makwate VDC Minutes, 6 SEP 72; Digawana VDC Minutes, 1 FEB 72; Good Hope VDC Minutes, 22 MAR 71, 10 MAY 71; CDA (Kalamare) Report, AUG-DEC 69

8 Good Hope VDC Minutes, 24 AUG 70; Kalamare VDC Minutes, 27 JUN 72, 13 JUL 72, 16 AUG 72; Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 20 OCT 70

slightly higher than that of councillors (25%: N = 49/193)¹ - with an important role in maintaining the existence and activity level of VDCs (and other organisations)² is understandable. The expectations of the Community Development Department, as indicated in the format of the frequent returns demanded of CDAs, were conducive to a quantitative rather than qualitative account of village activities.

The Headman³

It is widely accepted that the village chief or headman is the most important figure in the village, even to the extent of being described as the "leader" of the village.⁴ More often the decline in the position of the chief is commented upon, but even this presupposes a position of at least influence if not power;⁵ it is sometimes expressed as a veto or partial veto. This aspect will be dealt with below (in connexion with the VDC's relations with the people), but even regarding the headman's position in the VDC decision-making process it must be noted that he possesses a unique combination of advantages. Firstly he is resident, by definition, unlike some councillors and CDAs. Secondly he is a professional - unlike the councillors.⁶ Finally he

1 The figure given in Etherington - I, op. cit., p. 11, is 40%. The figure given above however is based on mentions in minutes and is thus certainly an understatement.

2 E.g. Dancing Club, Youth Club and Women's Club formed by one CDA in just over one year. CDA (Kalamare) Reports, JUN 68 - DEC 69.

3 Headman here means the principal traditional authority in the village. He may be officially or popularly entitled Chief, Chief's Representative, or Subordinate Tribal Authority, and may be Gazetted (and paid) or unpaid.

4 A. Kuper, Kalahari Village Politics: An African Democracy (1970), p. 237

5 A substantial minority of people supported the chief and/or did not realise the extent of the diminution of his powers in a survey conducted by Holm. J. D. Holm, Dimensions of Mass Involvement in Botswana Politics (1974), passim; and earlier unpublished survey data (mimeo), kindly made available to the writer.

6 Although increasingly "being a District Councillor" has come to be regarded as a profession. (See Appendix D)

is likely to be both permanently there, and local - unlike teachers. It is clear, therefore, that he has a decided edge, in most villages and in the long run, over the other ex officio members of the VDC - if he chooses to exercise his influence.

It is however exceptionally difficult to estimate, in a generalised way, the degree of influence which the headman can exert in practice. In the first place some villages contain a number of traditional authorities (where a village is sub-divided into customary wards, for instance).¹ Moreover the approximate number of attendances by the headman (51%), while looking impressive compared with the figures for councillors and CDAs, is partly a function of the fact that two VDCs had the headman as their chairman² (for at least part of their history) and in another, where the headman was vice-chairman, his presence was deemed essential for certain decisions to be taken.³ A further problem is that not all VDCs distinguished clearly between committee ("executive") and public kgotla ("general") meetings; by definition the headman would be present, as convener, at the latter. Furthermore if a chief does not feel like attending every meeting of the VDC he can afford to sit in the wings, wait for proposals to be reported to him⁴ and if necessary turn up at the next meeting: it is unusual for VDCs to move with precipitate haste even if no public meeting is required to endorse specific decisions! As a last resort the headman may wait

1 This is particularly the case in Mahalapye; and in Good Hope, which on paper included ten chiefs/headmen on its VDC (Good Hope VDC Minutes 22 MAR 71, 10 MAY 71)

2 Kalamare and Molapowabojang

3 Digawana VDC Minutes, 17 JUN 71, 1 FEB 72

4 Although Curtis points out that the chief's grapevine is not always guaranteed effective: Curtis, op. cit., p. 146-147

until the next kgotla meeting - where he will be playing on his home ground - before intervening.¹

A further relevant point is this: to what extent does the headman need the VDC? Insofar as he is an established official, his personal problems are likely to be subject of correspondence with the Secretary of the Tribal Administration;² as far as housing, water, and other amenities are concerned headmen were usually fairly well provided for, and defensive about them³ rather than ambitious for further visible material benefits⁴ of the kind which VDCs could provide. Indeed a headman may well be justified in regarding over-close identification with the VDC as dangerous, to the extent that VDCs are regarded by the village as just one of several voluntary organisations: it is only where the VDC is seen to have a superior position as "executive of the kgotla" that the headman could reasonably accept a leading role in it.

With all the above caveats entered, one or two examples of headmen's influence on VDC decision making can be noted. In Kalamare these include the decision to build a dispensary,⁶ and plans for the construction of a Tribal Administration office and for latrines at the kgotla.⁷ In another village the headman managed to get a storeroom located within his courtyard.⁸

1 Pitfalls may exist even here, however: ibid., Ch. V, passim

2 The volume of mail coming in to the Bangwato Tribal Administration Secretary's office surprised the writer. They covered personnel and judicial matters in the main.

3 For instance the traditional administrative office in many places has a telephone - something envied by councillors, who may or may not be allowed to use it on occasion.

4 Curtis (op. cit., p. 102) bears this out.

5 Etherington - III, op. cit., p. 8

6 Project selected by the Headman, according to a questionnaire return.

7 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 20 MAY 70, 17 JUN 70

8 In Makwate: CDA (Mookane) Annual Report 1971

The conclusion must however be that the headman's influence, whilst it is strong, is exercised either directly through a VDC office (chairman usually) or indirectly through an alliance with the leader(s) of the VDC. It is much more often the case that headmen maintain a certain distance from the VDC as a committee, but can play a crucial role in the mobilization of the people,¹ or the reverse. This point is taken up below.

Other Village Organisations

The other organisations referred to here fell into four categories: (i) the well-nigh ubiquitous Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs); (ii) the organisations composed entirely or mainly of women (Botswana Council of Women [BCW] affiliates, often simply called "Women's Club"; the Young Women's Christian Association [YWCA]; the Red Cross); (iii) Youth Clubs (with various titles); (iv) other (secular) organisations such as Sports Associations, Independence Day Committees and Water Syndicates. It should be mentioned that village level organisations including the VDC and the PTA afford the only "political" outlet for teachers since they are ineligible to stand for election to Councils or Parliament.² As regards women's organisations there is a tendency for the BCW and Red Cross to be identified in the capital with the (BDP) establishment, since the leadership is provided by wives of leading politicians, including Lady Khama and the wife of the present Foreign Minister.³

1 See Etherington - III, op. cit., p. 8

2 See J. D. Holm, "Rural Development in Botswana: three basic political trends," Rural Africana (Fall 72), pp. 87-88. The teachers' union has had a very limited impact.

3 This extract from the Daily News lends credence to such a view: "Raised fists of salute and shouts of 'Tsholetsa domi!' [the BDP slogan] greeted Sir Seretse Khama when he arrived in Kanye . . . to open the annual conference of the Botswana Democratic Party which he leads. "Junior Red Cross members danced round the President's car chanting a song in which the BDP Government was likened to a new-born baby. Lady Khama joined in the dancing." (BDN, 18 APR 74)

The YWCA, on the other hand, being an older-established organisation with pre-independence links with South Africa, has often been seen as the preserve of South African immigrants (many of them teachers' wives). It is dubious if this kind of interpretation holds much validity for the clubs established in individual villages, where local personalities are the dominant factors.

Reliable data on these organisations in the villages is hard to come by, owing principally to the changes that inevitably occur in all voluntary organisations over time. However Table 6.3 gives the membership as reported by CDAs for five villages, and compares them with the relevant population figures in the 1971 census (for the village proper and the Enumerator Area [EA] which includes it).

TABLE 6.3

Membership of Other Organisations

<u>Village</u>	<u>BCW</u>	<u>Red Cross</u>	<u>Youth Club</u>	<u>Population</u>	
				<u>Village</u>	<u>EA (c)</u>
(a) Mapoka (proper)	56	-	55 (23 male)	180	2,715*
(a) Mapoka-Nlapkwane	25	-	-	55	920
(a) Masunga	40	-	(formed later)	414	712
(b) Digawana	22	-	-	949	949
(b) Good Hope	22	10 (3 male)	-	472	995
(b) Molapowabojang	19	12 (female)	-	346	1,030

* de facto

Sources: (a) CDA (Mapoka), Annual Report, 1968

(b) Community Development (Kanye), Quarterly Progress Report, AUG-OCT 72

(c) Central Statistics Office, Guide to the Villages of Botswana (1973)

A majority of VDC members were also members of other organisations according to a Botswana Extension College survey in which the respondents were 266 officebearers. The average VDC member held 1.2 positions on committees of other (secular)¹ organisations. Table 6.4 indicates the ratio of "involved" to "non-involved" categories by office.

1 The difficulty with including churches is that many were not run by "committees". Nevertheless the percentage of VDC members on Church organising bodies was 32%. Source: as for Table 6.4

TABLE 6.4

POSITIONS IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS
per VDC member expressed as a ratio

	Involved:Non-involved
Chairman	1.8:1
Secretary	1.1:1
Treasurer	3.5:1
Member	1.9:1
<u>Other(a)</u>	<u>1.3:1</u>
Total	1.7:1

Note: (a) includes other officebearers (e.g. Vice-chairman)
 and ex officio members

Source: Etherington - II, p. 10

Although the data is not entirely satisfactory it can confidently be stated that there is a very substantial degree of overlap in the membership of VDCs and other organisations (44% in the case of PTAs)¹ This fact puts into perspective the findings of Vengroff that members of other organisations were much more disposed to participate in VDC or indeed any self-help projects:² the explanation is that the membership and leadership of those organisations typically overlapped with the VDC. In some cases self-help projects were independently organised by the PTA.³ More commonly other organisations assisted the VDC in implementing projects⁴ or were requested by the VDC to provide assistance.⁵ It was exceptional for the roles to be reversed.⁶

1 Ibid.

2 Vengroff, op. cit., pp. 221-225

3 E.g. in Molapowabojang (VDC minutes 11 MAR 73, 13 JUN 73) and Makwate (CDA [Mookane] Monthly Report, MAY 69).

4 For instance the YWCA in Kalamare (VDC Minutes, 14 NOV 68)

5 The PTA was asked for help in Mahalapye South (VDC Minutes, 21 JUL 73) and Mapoka (VDC Minutes, 15 OCT 70, 2 OCT 71).

6 One such exception was help with bricks for the YWCA in Kalamare (VDC Minutes, 20 NOV 67), provided at the urging of the Headman and the MP.

The same pattern is found in the realm of finance. Apart from one case of a loan¹ and one of a grant² from the VDC, the traffic was in the other direction. As a rule donations³ were made on an ad hoc basis, although one PTA claimed to make a donation "almost annually".⁴ Likewise VDCs did not generally try to levy subscriptions⁵ but asked other organisations for loans⁶ or ad hoc donations.⁷ The voluntary nature of the relationship between the VDC and other organisations comes out quite clearly.⁸

Joint meetings with one or more organisations were commonly called by VDCs, particularly when there was some event in the offing such as a Presidential visit or a Youth Rally; it was rare for the initiative to be taken by another organisation in convening such meetings.⁹ The VDC's position may perhaps be summarised as prima inter pares: playing the leading role but with little more than moral authority to back it up. One or two quotations illustrate VDC members' view of the relationship. The PTA in one village was described as having an "advisory role", and was criticised for failing to report to the VDC.¹⁰ In another the VDC was described as an "invigilance committee" which could expect to be

1 To the school: Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 2 JUL 70

2 To the YWCA to cover costs of sending delegates to a conference: Kalamare VDC Minutes, 20 OCT 70

3 Examples: From the YWCA in Kalamare (VDC Minutes, 23 OCT 68, 7 MAR 73) and Mahalapye (Central VDC Minutes, 6 JUL 71) and the BCW (ibid.)

4 In Masunga, 1967-72

5 An exception was Mapoka where the Sports Association was expected to pay an annual subscription. (VDC Minutes, 24 JUL 71)

6 E.g. from the PTA (Mahalapye South VDC Minutes, 29 MAR 73)

7 For instance from the BCW in Molapowabojang during a financial crisis (VDC Minutes, 22 NOV 72)

8 And is underlined by a VDC/PTA dispute about paying for classroom repairs (Mapoka VDC Minutes, 12 NOV 70)

9 An example is the Digawana PTA (VDC Minutes, 24 JUN 72)

10 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 18 APR 70 and 21 OCT 71

kept informed of the Women's Club activities.¹ In a third village the Independence [Day Celebration] Committee reported formally to the VDC, albeit reiterating its independent status.²

VDCs in a number of villages assumed an administrative or supervisory role appropriate for the "executive of the kgotla". In one village it asserted that the VDC Treasurer should hold the funds of all "branch committees".³ In another it took over responsibility for the postal service,⁴ while in a third it vetted projects to be undertaken by other organisations⁵ and agreed to take over and run the football ground.⁶ It should however be emphasised that it could do none of these things without the co-operation of the other organisations concerned. The significance of this is that "control" of the VDC by no means guarantees control over anything else.

The VDC and the People

However misleading the term "executive of the kgotla" may be as a description of VDCs, it does point to the crucial importance for the VDC (and therefore distinguishes it from the other organisations) of the kgotla. In a subject where one searches in vain for a simple universal pattern the centrality of their relationship is indisputable. The centrality of the kgotla as an institution has been widely commented on.⁷

1 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 31 OCT 67

2 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 20 OCT 70

3 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 6 NOV 68

4 From the PTA (Digawana VDC Minutes, 24 JUN 72)

5 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 20 JAN 71

6 At the suggestion of Queen's Park Rangers F. C. (*ibid.*, 25 FEB 72)

7 From the classic studies of Schapera to the more recent works of, *inter alia*, Curtis, Kuper and Vengroff (all *op. cit.*).

For village development the kgotla is the platform for announcements, financial statements, progress reports and the discussion of future and ongoing projects. The feeling that the kgotla was the only official means of making announcements lay behind the exhortations in some villages to VDC members not to "reveal VDC secrets" before the appropriate kgotla meeting¹ made the plans public: it was important not to weaken in any way the legitimising function of the general kgotla meeting.

The fundamental principle that kgotla decisions, arrived at by consensus and after debate, were binding on all villagers meant that VDCs could, and had to, use the kgotla as a means of mobilising the the people for action. As an example from a village where self-help work had run into difficulties, the following extracts from the VDC Minute Book indicate the Committee's approach to the kgotla. The VDC agrees to ask for kgotla meetings: (i) "at which the people would be told to do the work;" (ii) "to explain that [certain projects] should be started;" (iii) "to tell people to start at once."²

Village development on a self-help basis has to face formidable obstacles. The climate (temperature over 90°F in the shade in summer); poverty; the traditional division of labour (if that is the appropriate term) in which much of the physical work is done by women and much drinking is done by men; the seasonal pattern of subsistence agriculture; and frequently apathy. None of these factors is new, but they combine with modern factors in different ways and sometimes result in intractable problems. The migration of the young and the more educated people away

1 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 5 MAR 71

2 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 16 AUG 72, 20 SEP 72, 25 JUL 73 (emphasis added)

from the villages,¹ for instance, tends to leave fewer able-bodied men than women in the village. Women are therefore expected to carry out the bulk of the work and the ratio of women to men on development projects has been put at 7:3 in one village;² in another village it was stated that "mostly only women turn up to work".³ (The official national figure given for "Ipelegeng" workers in 1967 was 90% women.)⁴ Yet the participation in the kgotla is traditionally a male preserve, and women are in the minority on VDCs - outnumbered 3:1 in the Southern District, according to one estimate⁵ while a national sample survey gave the female percentage as only 13%.⁶ This rather fundamental fact is rarely discussed at (male-dominated) development conferences!

A more generally recognised problem⁷ is the confusion caused by the successive programmes of famine relief, notable the Food-for-Work scheme, and the attempt to run voluntary self-help projects in parallel⁸ with or after the cessation of, the famine/drought relief scheme. Testimony to this problem was paid by a senior Headman thus: "It has been a difficult task for people to embark with enthusiasm, since the discontinuation of Food-for-Work,"⁹ and by a Community Development

1 See Report on the Population Census 1971 (1972), Ch. 13, and the (unpublished) proceedings of the Workshop on the National Migration Study, UBLS, Gaborone, 1977. This factor was identified by a senior District Council official as a major contribution to the lack of "new ideas of development" in the villages: Central District Council Development Projects Report (n.d.), p. 2.

2 Nlapkwane (Mapoka): ACDO (Francistown) Annual Report for 1968

3 CDA (Kalamare) Monthly Report OCT 70

4 This is the estimate given in the Botswana Government Relief & Rehabilitation Unit's first report (BDN, 20 JAN 67).

5 Community Development Officer (Kanye), Quarterly Progress Report, AUG-OCT 72

6 Etherington - II, op. cit., p. 2

7 See p. 39 above, and pp. 424-425 below.

8 E.g. in Kalamare with some difficulty (VDC Minutes, 19 SEP 73)

9 Address by Chief Letsholathebe to MPs visiting Tsamaya, 6 JUN 70.

Assistant as follows: "Ever since the stoppage of Food-for-Work scheme in May, no progress is being continued."¹

It is tacitly assumed that the way to overcome the various obstacles to development outlined above is to harness the traditional system to that end. The corollary to this assumption is the prevalent belief that the chief or headman is in a key position, perhaps holding a virtual veto, as convener of the kgotla - hence remarks such as: "It is regrettable that where headmen are co-operative this should not be taken advantage of."² It may be true that "chiefs . . . feel that [CDAs] have taken their job,"³ that "headmen . . . do not offer us any help and do not take an interest in what [VDCs] do,"⁴ or that "chiefs are not well aware that times are changing They complain that their subjects no longer respect them as they used to. Sometimes they think the CDAs, committee, councillors are taking away their powers. . . . consequently retardation sets in."⁵ But one should beware of taking such statements at face value since the chiefs may be convenient scapegoats for council officials, CDAs and VDC leaders. At any rate it is rare for a chief to refuse to call a kgotla meeting at the VDCs request - indeed such action could be termed unconstitutional - and only in one village was the headman criticised by the VDC on these grounds.⁶ In one other village the chief told the Assistant Community Development Officer that

1 CDA (Kalamare), Monthly Report, JUL 71

2 Central District Council Secretary, quoted in Mmegi wa Dikgang [Serowe], III, 16, (29 SEP 72) p. 1

3 CDA (Mahalapye) Monthly Report MAY 68 (Referring to the Kalamare area)

4 Report by Mahalapye delegates on Rural Development Conference in Serowe, 23-24 APR 72

5 ACDO (Francistown), North Eastern Annual Report 1969

6 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 17 FEB 72

he (the ACDO) could only handle the people through him (the chief).¹ But deliberate and outright obstruction by the headman seems rare; on the other hand it may well be his example that is important, rather than his words.

One aspect of the traditional system which has been employed in VDC attempts to mobilize the people is their organisation into wards, in the traditional sense of village sub-divisions (each with its sub-headman and sub-kgotla). The VDC Handbook² recommends that the various traditional wards should be represented in the VDC, but it is in general accidental if this happens. Only one VDC (unwritten) constitution was based on ward representation,³ while another used the councillors' wards (polling districts) as the basis for sub-committees;⁴ one of these sub-committees subsequently resorted to "segmentation" of their area on the basis of traditional wards.⁵

The purpose of sub-division by traditional ward was to bring the responsibility for implementing central kgotla decisions closer to the people. Thus wards were given pieces of land to level for a building site,⁶ assigned target figures of bricks to be moulded,⁷ or told to build shelters.⁸ Equally common was the pattern of ward collection of money.⁹ One of the advantages of this system was that a defaulting

1 Good Hope VDC Minutes, 29 JUN 71

2 op. cit., p. 5

3 Masunga (VDC Minutes, 28 NOV 71; Community Development [Francistown] Annual Report, 1968)

4 In Mahalapye. This was done at the suggestion of the CDA (Monthly Report, DEC 69)

5 Mahalapye South VDC Minutes, 23 MAY 73, 21 JUL 73

6 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 23 OCT 68

7 Mapoka VDC Minutes, 13 MAY 74

8 Ibid., 23 MAY 71

9 VDC Minutes, Tsamaya 2 JUL 70; Makwate 3 MAR 74; Kalamare 18 NOV 70 and 26 JUL 72

ward could be fined,¹ if the system was strong enough to impose such sanctions; an extension of this was the fining of those who held parties, at the fields ("lands") some distance from the village proper, without permits, thus asserting central kgotla control over these "temporary" settlements on the periphery of the village area.²

The question of sanctions for non-compliance with VDC/kgotla decisions has been a perennial topic of debate. Steady pressure for sanctions to be applied has come from many quarters. For instance, the VDC Chairman, the Chief and a majority of villagers assembled at Mmashoro (in the Central District) supported the idea,³ a sentiment echoed by villagers in Mapoka who complained that "the chief doesn't apply sanctions to non-workers."⁴ Nevertheless the Community Development Department "have fairly consistently opposed the idea of penalties for non-participators."⁵ Only in one village studied were sanctions seriously attempted against those who failed to turn up to work or to pay subscriptions.⁶ But in general the BDP Government is anxious to eschew anything reminiscent of the old regimental labour system whereby chiefs had the power to send out the age-regiments to undertake various tasks.⁷

VDCs have tried to use the chief/headman for various specific tasks. In one village where the VDC was having difficulty in getting

1 As happened in Mapoka (VDC Minutes, 23 MAY 71)

2 Where this happened, the Headman was also VDC Chairman; permit fees accrued to the VDC (Kalamare VDC Minutes, 29 AUG 73).

3 "Should they be fined for not co-operating?" Mmegi wa Dikgang, III, 17 (20 OCT 72), p. 1

4 Kgotla meeting, 7 OCT 74 (eyewitness account)

5 S. J. Tennent, Report on Community Development (unpublished)(n.d. [1974]), p. 22

6 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 13 MAY 71, 21 OCT 71, 17 SEP 72.

7 A rather surprising finding of a survey by Holm (unpublished data) was that 79% of adult respondents (and 71% of school children) said they would heed such a call.

support for a water reticulation project, the VDC decided to "ask the kgotla to help us dig the trench."¹ In another village an influential speaker suggested "that we assign this task to the Chief as he always knows best" and at the same meeting a more radical member complained that "the Chief is really ruling through this committee."² In the Barolong capital village, Good Hope, the authority of the (Paramount) Chief Besele II was invoked to summon (via the Tribal [now Local] Police) the headmen of the area to attend VDC meetings.³

Whether or not the chief is "co-operative", the relationship between VDC and people requires popular attendance at the kgotla. Here the record varies dramatically, from attendances of 300 in Mapoka,⁴ 250 and 195 in Mahalapye ("the response of the people is really encouraging . . . several big meetings held"),⁵ to complaints about the "unco-operativeness of the villagers",⁶ culminating in the plaintive report : "we called meetings seven times but nobody came."⁷ Curtis found that "absenteeism" was a deliberate tactic employed on certain occasions to cause a meeting to fail.⁸

Even when people do turn up at kgotla meetings, that does not automatically solve the problem of getting people to turn out to work on projects, since the people's attitude to the VDC, or the Community

1 Makwate VDC Minutes, 14 OCT 72

2 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 10 JUL 70

3 Good Hope VDC Minutes, 15 MAR 71

4 CDA (Mapoka) Yearly Report 1972 ("attendance very good")

5 Community Development Region II Monthly Report, AUG 68; CDA (Mahalapye) Monthly Report, MAY 68

6 Molapowabojang VDC Minutes, 13 FEB 73

7 Digawana VDC Minutes, 8 APR 74

8 Curtis, op. cit., p. 147

Development workers or the headman, may play a part. Thus one finds cris de coeur from VDCs such as these:

- (i) "We are working alone";¹
- (ii) "The Chairman complained at being left alone to do the cementing";²
- (iii) "The people are difficult to manage, they were better off with the chief";³
- (iv) "The committee had informed the people of their intentions but the people do nothing."⁴

Confirmation of the difficulties encountered by Community Development staff is indicated in many reports, of which the following is only the most eloquent:

I have been gravely concerned about all the people, and they are many indeed, who disregard the value of Community Development and did not at all bother to contribute anything, either in the form of money or labour, towards implementing the projects which the VDC finds fit to embark on. . . . these people with all malicious intent often mock at the essence of Community Development as such that even goes as far as use humiliating and provocative expressions against the Ipelegeng enthusiast. They deliberately do these things because they say that Community Development is not an obligatory commitment and therefore it is not important, and they can do whatever they please.

As a result of all these embarrassments and confusions, many people who have previously shown a great deal of keenness on Community Development become less interested, and everyone lapses into a state of indifference on Ipelegeng projects. . . .

. . . . This sort of thing does not in fact occur only here in the Central District but also in other districts, as experience has already shown. . . .⁵

More light will be thrown on the successes and failures of VDCs as mobilising agencies in the section below on the individual

1 Makwate VDC Minutes, 16 SEP 72

2 Kalamare VDC Minutes, 11 JUN 69

3 Ibid., 20 NOV 67

4 Makwate VDC Minutes, 3 MAR 74

5 CDA (Mahalapye) Monthly Report, JUL 69

villages, but two points may be made here. In the first place the tendency seems to have shifted from do-it-yourself to the hiring of builders. Secondly some of the most successful VDCs have often been able to raise substantial amounts of money from "outside" sources such as businessmen or other donors. In both cases the poorer villages are at a disadvantage.

THE VDC AND THE DISTRICT: PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION

If Village Development Committees form an integral part of a chain of democratic institutions, the question arises as to the nature of the link, particularly between the VDC and the District Council or, more generally, between the village and the district. It is to be expected that councillors, as the only ex officio members of both VDC and Council, would play a central role in the process of communication between the two levels. Like MPs, councillors are (in the main) elected to represent the people but, unlike MPs, all councillors form part of the executive as well as the deliberative arm of government at district level, since the District Council performs both functions (particularly but not exclusively through committees). Almost continuously the councillors representing the nine villages selected were members of one or more Council committees. To what extent then, have councillors (and to a lesser extent MPs) performed the function of "brokers" or "middlemen"?¹ And who were their main rivals for, or what were the main obstacles to, these roles?

In order to examine the question it is necessary to look briefly at the various methods of communication. Some relate primarily to the national framework and these do not directly concern this study. Radio Botswana, the Botswana Daily News, and certain ephemeral publications²

1 See p. 4 above

2 All party periodicals and pamphlets can be so described. Attempts to found local or regional newspapers have all foundered. The Mafeking Mail & Botswana Guardian (with a small circulation) is the only alternative to the Government-owned Daily News.

fall into this category. Owing to the fact of majority illiteracy, oral methods have to be preëminent (with the telephone a rare facility in most of the nine villages). Access to the telephone and private transport are particularly valuable to any would-be brokers: public transport coverage is patchy in Eastern Botswana, and here the right to have travelling costs defrayed is a most useful advantage.

Nevertheless the villages in Eastern Botswana are not nearly as isolated as these of the West.¹ To the extent that VDCs correspond direct with the District Council (and other district agencies), however, the scope for middlemen is automatically reduced. The relevant question in this connection is who is the recipient of written communications.

The various "bridge personnel" will now be examined in turn.

The Councillor

With the notable exception of two villages out of the nine, councillors in general did not function as middlemen between the VDC and the District Council, although in two other cases the councillor explicitly or implicitly promised the VDC that he would report back to them on Council business and represent them in Council decision making. Moreover with very few exceptions the minuted decisions of VDCs and those of the District Councils in covering the same period bore no direct relationship with one another;³ where councillors did take up matters on behalf of the VDC they did it with the Council Administration.

1 Such as the celebrated village of Kuli studied by Kuper (op. cit.)

2 Good Hope (VDC Minutes, 24 AUG 70) and Kalamare (VDC Minutes, 26 NOV 69)

3 One exception was the problem of boreholes in the Mapoka area raised in the Council: Mapoka VDC Minutes, 15 OCT 70; North East District Council Minutes, 22 DEC 70 and 22 DEC 71. Another was the Mahalapye Community Centre, which was discussed several times in the Council: Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 10 JUL 70 - 5 JAN 72 (passim); Central District Council Minutes, 25 MAR 71, 16-17 SEP 71, 20 DEC 71, 22-23 MAR 72

Several examples of this can be cited from the most northerly village in this study, Mapoka, which had two councillors (one elected, one nominated).¹ Councillors made arrangements for assistance with repairing damaged buildings² and for the provision of building materials;³ and reported to the VDC on the arrival of new teachers, the new Land Board system, Council bye-laws, and details of a post of midwife for the clinic.⁴ In the quasi-urban "large village" of Mahalapye the two elected councillors arranged for the use of Council transport,⁵ helped arrange for a delegation to see the Council Secretary to seek assistance for the Community Centre project,⁶ explained about Council planning regulations; and made a major announcement about the workings of the new Land Board system, during which they said that all applications should be endorsed by, and routed through, the appropriate councillor, MP or headman.⁷

Members of Parliament

Of the six MPs who represented the nine villages examined here, only two played a significant role in VDC affairs. It cannot be coincidence that these two were the only MPs resident in these villages. Confirmation of the importance of the fact of residence is provided by the lack of comparable activity by one of these "active" MPs in the affairs of the VDC in an outlying part of his constituency, and by

1 This was true from October 1969 onwards.

2 Mapoka VDC Minutes, 15 OCT 70, 27 MAR 71

3 Ibid., 12 NOV 70, 8 MAY 71

4 Ibid., 15 OCT 70, 27 MAR 71, 2 OCT 71, 2 JUN 71

5 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 13 JUL 71

6 Ibid., 17 NOV 70, 9 DEC 71, 6 JUL 71. An interesting point is that the original request made by the VDC was for a meeting with the CDC Community & Economic Development Committee - the convener of which was the Councillor for Mahalapye North (letter from VDC Secretary to Council Secretary, 19 NOV 70),

7 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 10 JUL 70

the (more minor) role played in Mahalapye by the MP for a neighbouring constituency¹ who was Subordinate Tribal Authority (sub-chief) for Mahalapye. The contribution made by these MPs is examined elsewhere;² suffice it to state here that their specifically "broker" role was much less in evidence than their function as "patrons".

However the MP for Mahalapye did play an active part in a delegation to the Central District Council, reporting back to the Mahalapye Central VDC on the outcome;³ and was associated with the attempt to have all applications to the Ngwato Land Board routed through the councillor, chief or MP.⁴

VDC Officebearers

The other category of elected people (one hesitates to call them "politicians") which formed a bridge between the VDC and the District Headquarters was certain key officebearers in five different VDCs. The interesting fact about the five was that they were either headmen or known party activists, or both. One of them, who became chairman of the VDC⁵ for a while, was a shopkeeper and generally regarded as an Opposition supporter; another, also a trader, was national Vice-President of the BNF and held various office on the VDC.⁶ The remaining three were all members of the traditional administration. One was a member of a leading BDP family which included the local MP and councillor; he was elected VDC Chairman.⁷ Another headman-cum-VDC-chairman had

1 Tswapong South

2 In the following section on the nine individual villages, and in Chapter 9.

3 VDC Minutes, 9 DEC 70

4 Ibid., 10 JUL 70

5 In Mapoka

6 Both Mahalapye Central and Mahalapye North

7 In Kalamare

represented his area¹ as a BDP councillor, while his opposite number (and VDC vice-chairman) in a neighbouring village² received the BDP nomination for the same ward in 1969 (but lost to the BNF candidate).

The "broker" activities of four of these five officebearers fell short of the dramatic, being concerned with writing letters and/or bearing verbal messages back and forward; moreover it was apparent that the headmen were able to use their dual position to advantage in establishing their role as leading communicator. The net effect was to blur the distinctions between the traditional and elected positions. The traders had the advantage of mobility, which they used to establish alternative routes of communication with the district centres. The most effective broker, and indeed leader, was the then BNF Vice-President, whose achievements are catalogued below,³ but included in particular the idea of sending delegations to Serowe on two occasions;⁴ and delegations were a rare phenomenon at either district or national level. Dr. Koma provided many ideas: witness a request for a series of bye-laws to cover Mahalapye, contained in a letter from Dr. Koma as VDC Assistant Secretary to the District Council Secretary.⁵ The Council Secretary's reply suggested that some of the requests be conveyed to the Subordinate Tribal Authority (an ex officio member of the VDC!) and that others be tabled by the councillors for Mahalapye at the next meeting of the Council.⁶ The two councillors concerned did not follow up this suggestion.⁷

1 The electoral ward of Gathwane, which included Molapowabojang and Digawana.

2 Digawana

3 In the account of the Mahalapye Central VDC

4 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 17 NOV 70, 9 DEC 70, 6 JUL 71

5 Dated 4 SEP 70

6 Date: 10 SEP 70

7 CDC Minutes, 14-16 DEC 70

It is evident, then, that a number of VDC officebearers provided an alternative to councillors (or MPs) as a bridge between District Council and VDC. The main challenge to elected politicians' "middleman" role (or, more realistically, the potential for such a role) came from officials - employees of central or local government.

Community Development Assistants

CDAs were important as channels of communication. But even that statement - like almost all other generalisations about the villages - has to be qualified. In the early period of this study (since Community Development was made the "Ipelegeng" Department), Community Development personnel did have an important function to perform, particularly as there was much confusion about the parallel functions of the Council and the Community Development Department in approving projects and supplying tools and building materials. However by the end of the period only 7% of project application forms (according to a sample survey) were being routed via CDAs while 82% were sent direct to the District Council.¹ This much-needed streamlining² culminated in the transfer of CDAs to become part of the Council staff.

The CDA's role was most prominent when the CDA was resident in the village and where no strong leadership was forthcoming from other quarters. One such village was Tsamaya, where the CDA explained the District Council's Development Plan and assisted with the filling-in of project application forms.³ Kalamare was a classic case: here too the

1 Etherington - I, op. cit., p. 9. 6% went "to the kgotla" and 6% elsewhere.

2 One aspect of the change in the system was the redesign of the Project Application Form. Originally destined for the Community Development Department, it now goes to the Council. Wass, op. cit., App. VIII; VDC Handbook, op. cit., Appendix.

3 Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 17 JUN 73

CDAs helped fill in application forms, informed the VDC about Food-for-Work selection procedures etc., and above all read out letters from Serowe. This last aspect, which was very important, shows that the (resident) CDA was frequently the recipient of letters from the District Council.

Non-resident CDAs were in a much weaker position, due largely to their lack of transport. As Tennent points out, there were only 36 CDAs/ACDOs, supervised by nine Regional Community Development Officers, for something like 300 recognised villages.¹ Some did not possess even a bicycle, and were in any case usually unaware of imminent VDC meetings away from their local base.

But residence alone did not guarantee an important role for CDAs, who barely feature in the achievements of villages like Mapoka (in the earlier period), or Mahalapye, where there were active middlemen/patrons. Apart from purely personal factors, the explanation for passivity seems to be the belief in untrammelled self-help: the average CDA was happy to be able to send in reports of progress viewed from the sidelines.

When a VDC was manifestly failing to function, however, as in the case of Makwate, it was the non-resident CDA who repeatedly intervened and tried to mobilise the committee, and the village in general, into action, appealing the while to the councillor and the MP to come in and assist in the process of invigoration.²

Regional Community Development Officers did tour their districts and one officer saw his role as a middleman, referring to himself as "your representative in Kanye", and urging the VDC to contact him first

1 Tennent, op. cit., p.16

2 CDA (Mookane) Monthly Reports, NOV 68, APR 69, MAY 69 and Annual Report 1971

if they visited District H.Q..¹ A rather different approach was taken by an officer based in Francistown who wrote to a VDC urging them to sort themselves out!² Later correspondence between the VDC and the same officer concerned the CDA who was supposed to be in the village but had disappeared, to the annoyance of the VDC.³

District Council and District Administration Staff

Some categories of Council staff paid regular routine visits to the villages to deal with specialised matters, particularly revenue and education. But one characteristic of the period was the increasing number of visits to deal with particular problems, especially those concerning village development. This reflects the increases in staff available to the Councils - posts such as Council Adviser, (filled by expatriate volunteers), Works Superintendents and Development Officers. The District Officers (Development), who were secretaries to the District Development Committees and part of the District Administration, were a parallel cadre. Altogether they made up a formidable team of informed people who could talk to villagers with some authority about future plans and current problems.

At least as important were the Council Secretaries, who came to tour their districts with ever-growing frequency.⁴ This was especially true of Lenyeletse Seretse in the Central District and preëminently of Daniel Kwele, who was able to get round his relatively small North East District with ease. The interest of the two Council Secretaries in touring was more than just administrative (although each had

1 Digawana VDC Minutes, 24 JUN 71

2 Mapoka VDC Minutes, 19 FEB 71

3 Ibid., 24 JUL 71

4 See above, pp. 178 and 217-218

reservations about councillors' reliability as informants):¹ both possessed strong political instincts, Kwele being ex-President of the BNF and L. M. Seretse being destined for a parliamentary career with the BDP. Kwele in particular gave every indication of building up a base of support for himself.²

Council Correspondence

One of the most striking findings derived from interviewing and studying the records of the VDCs is the importance of direct correspondence between the VDC (generally either the Secretary, or sometimes the CDA, less frequently another member of the committee) and the Council Secretary or other official at District Headquarters. The tendency seemed to increase over the period studied, especially in the North East where the Council Secretary attempted to formalise and control the hiring of labour and contractors.³ In the Southern District⁴ it was the predominant method of communication.

Self-evidently the greater the importance of direct correspondence, the less the opportunities for middlemen. The implications of this are the subject of the concluding part of this chapter.

1 See for instance Report on Third Tour of the Central District, 9th November-21st November 1972, in which the Council Secretary observed that "Councillors are making no serious efforts to visit their electoral wards before important meetings." (p. 16)

2 However on occasion Kwele's vigorous manner was counter-productive, as when he berated the Tsamaya VDC publicly for tardiness in completing projects; this occasioned an impassioned and bitter debate at the next VDC meeting and a letter of protest. Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 14 APR 72

3 E. g. Mapoka VDC Minutes, 24 JUL 71, 26 OCT 71; Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 13 MAY 71, 7 JUL 71, 17 SEP 72

4 As records of correspondence in Molapowabojang VDC Minute Book clearly indicate

THE NINE VILLAGES

It will already have become apparent that wide differences existed in the structure, achievements and style of the VDCs in the nine villages studied. It may therefore be helpful to give a thumbnail sketch bringing out the salient features of each VDC in turn. This is preceded in each case by the relevant extract from the official Village Guide.¹ The villages are presented in geographical order, from North to South.

NORTH EAST DISTRICT

(i) Mapoka: Councillor-led success story

EA Population: 2,715 (de facto), 4,062 (de jure);
Dwellings[compounds]: 438 (437 occupied)
Facilities: Church -LMS/UCCSA [Congregational] - Visiting Preacher; Health - Clinic - Staff Nurse stationed here - visited monthly by medical officer; School - Standard 7 [Primary 7]; Water supply - borehole; Cattle crush; AD [Agricultural Demonstrator]; CDA; Local/Tribal Police Post; Sub-chief and customary court.
[Commercial] Establishments: 2

A number of factors combine to account for the relatively high level of activity in this border village. The BPP councillor (who was also the unofficial leader of the BPP group in the Council) was the leading light in the VDC and had substantial political support from 1966 to 1974 in this solidly BPP area. On the VDC, however, he was run a close second by the unsuccessful BDP candidate in 1966 and 1969, who was elected to the VDC at its inception and before he became a nominated councillor in 1969. The rivalry between these two can be described as creative tension, perhaps kept that way by the unshakable hold the BPP appeared to have on the area. The Shè (sub-chief of the area) was generally regarded as a BPP sympathiser and lent his support to the VDC,

1 Central Statistics Office, Guide to the Villages of Botswana (1973). The extracts have been only slightly edited. (Note that the information given in the Guide is incomplete.)

in particular threatening outlying wards with sanctions when appropriate. Traditional wards were used as the basis for a number of enterprises - a difficult undertaking in areas such as this, characterised by the Kalanga dispersed settlement pattern. This situation may account for the relatively warm attitude of the BPP councillor to village grouping proposals.¹

As with the neighbouring and rival village of Masunga, the émigrés from the village encouraged a feeling of pride in Mapoka's development and offered a little financial assistance.² But developments in the village were largely due to the VDC's own fund-raising efforts, assisted by the PTA, the Council, and above all the councillors as middlemen. It is worth noting that the absence of one CDA for a period of over six months had no effect on the VDC, nor did the MP play a significant role other than at election time.

The main problem with which the VDC had to deal was the status of the outlying settlement of Nlapkwane where the BDP councillor lived. Eventually, after trying to run joint meetings of all organisations in both central Mapoka and Nlapkwane, a separate VDC was set up at Nlapkwane, providing the BDP councillor with a potential power base. But both councillors continued to participate in both VDCs.

(ii) Masunga: sedate pace

EA Population: 712; Dwellings: 136 (119 occupied)

Facilities: Churches - St. John's, St. Paul's, UCCSA (Resident Preacher); Water supply: Borehole, well, dam, river; 2 cattle crushes; School - Standard 7; VDC; AD; Tribal Police Post; Health Post - opened Nov/72 - visited by Nurse from Mapoka clinic; Sub-chief and customary court.

Establishments: 2

To some extent Masunga was a rival of neighbouring Mapoka. Politically distinctive (for a North Eastern village) in the low level of

1 Kgotla meeting, 13 MAY 74 (eyewitness account)

2 Mapoka VDC Minutes, 19 FEB 71, 26 OCT 71

support for the People's Party, its village politics were low key. The VDC regarded quarterly meetings as the norm, and considered itself as the umbrella organisation with branches in the traditional wards (situated some distance away from the central kgotla) and as far away as Johannesburg. The amount of money raised by the VDC itself was limited: émigrés donated sizeable sums from time to time and the "internal branches" were expected to raise the balance.¹ The main activities were concerned with the school, which was well represented on the central VDC. The sub-chief, one of whose relations was elected BDP councillor in 1969, seemed quite happy with the VDC and its pace of activity. There was no resident CDA and no contact with the MP; the Agricultural Demonstrator was active but mainly in forming a Farmers' Association rather than on the VDC.

The dominant figure in the village however was the astute Councillor Mannathoko, who, as has been described above,² first won the Council seat as an Independent and later declared for the Democratic Party; the ward then elected a BDP councillor. Between them, Mapoka and Masunga did fairly well out of the Council's allocation of resources and this is attributed largely to the efforts of the four councillors involved. Mannathoko in particular, as a shopkeeper and leader of the Northern Botswana Traders Union, was able to act as a patron and broker, especially during his spells as Council Chairman.

The effect of the position outlined above was to make external sources (émigrés and the Council) the main sources of resources for the village; the VDC was in part by-passed by Councillor Mannathoko.

1 Masunga VDC Minute Book, financial records and minutes, passim.

2 Pp. 208-211

(iii) Tsamaya: teachers versus headman¹

EA Population: 1,043 (de facto), 1,057 (de jure); Dwellings: 288 (199 occupied).

Facilities: Church - Old Apostolic Church (no building), UCCSA (Visiting Preacher); School - Standard 6; Water Supply - Dam; Railway Line - siding; AD; Headman and customary court.

Establishments: 3

The Tsamaya VDC was unusual in having, for much of the time, teachers in the positions not only of Secretary but also of Chairman.² With the arrival of a perceptive CDA, moreover, the "modern" leadership of the VDC embarked on a fairly ambitious programme and was encouraged to further efforts by the Council Secretary. However it ran into serious difficulties. These can be attributed in part to the Shè, senior headman of the area, who lived in the village. His original reaction of "relief" at having the responsibility for development lifted from his shoulders³ turned out to look more like an inclination to leave the VDC alone to get on with it. So when the VDC decided to apply sanctions against backsliders they found difficulty in pinning down the Shè to taking action.

Popular reluctance to participate may well have reflected what Kerven describes as "the universal suspicion of 'successful' people in the community" as well as the "political decentralization . . . of several small new hamlets around Tsamaya, which are now claiming political autonomy from the main village."⁴ A more problematical factor was party

1 For a brief history of Tsamaya see C. Kerven, Report on Tsamaya Village (1976), pp. 1-2

2 This was sufficiently unusual to be remarked upon by the visiting Community Development Officer for Francistown. Tsamaya VDC Minutes, 15 APR 70.

3 Ibid., 5 MAR 70

4 Kerven, op. cit., pp. 10 and 3. The VDC appealed to the District Council on the latter issue (VDC Minutes, 2 JUL 70).

political allegiance. The Senior Headman was known to support the BDP, which fact was rewarded by his co-option to the Council Licensing Authority.¹ The populace as a whole however supported the BPP, whose councillor (after 1969) was the brother of a nearby headman. But neither councillor (the other was the ex-BPP councillor who was nominated to the Council after crossing the carpet to the BDP and then losing his seat) played an active part in the VDC, attending only intermittently. The BPP MP moreover did not figure at all in the village, being perhaps more concerned with his Francistown base. None of these three politicians in any case resided in Tsamaya proper. Arguably the BPP could have done more to support the VDC, but did not do so. Thus the VDC, led by teachers who did not originate from Tsamaya, were left to try to mobilise the people on their own.

CENTRAL DISTRICT

(iv) Kalamare: long-running family show

Population: 912; Dwellings: 202 (156 occupied)

Facilities: Churches - UCCSA, Pentecostal Holiness Church (Resident Preacher), Roman Catholic (Visiting Preacher); School - Standard 7; VDC; YWCA; Postal Order, Telegraph and telephone agency.

The VDC of Kalamare had a lot going for it. It was one of the first established and maintained virtually unbroken records from 1967 to 1974. The Tswana nucleated settlement pattern is more conducive to meetings than the Kalanga system of the North East and in this case the authority of the headman was wedded to the VDC through his position as Chairman;² furthermore the VDC received a regular income from permits for parties, court fines, and other "traditional" sources not normally available to VDCs. Two other active members of the Committee were

1 NEDC Minutes, 21 DEC 72

2 There were complicated changes in the post of headman but the incumbent in this village was always drawn from the same family.

close relatives of the Chairman (one later becoming councillor and the other court clerk), as was the MP, who occasionally attended VDC meetings and invented the idea of having four "MP's nominees" on the VDC.¹ The committee was fortunate also in possessing competent secretaries/assistant secretaries (teachers) and, for much of the time, a resident CDA. Politically Kalamare was solid Democratic Party territory, no Opposition candidate having ever stood in the Council ward in any of the three elections.

After a fairly bright start however the VDC began increasingly to experience problems, until it had reached the stage of an adverse report in the local newspaper and the District Council had to step in to complete a project.² To some extent the VDC was the victim of its own early success: it simply could not keep up the momentum. But there were other factors. Inefficiency was one: e.g. it took eleven months to run a raffle³ and minor bills remained unpaid for fifteen months.⁴ Another was a growing reluctance by many villagers to take part in do-it-yourself work, and this was paralleled by instances of autonomous activities in the "lands" settlements, where people were able to evade the Headman's regulations on the holding of parties and were less and less likely to contribute cash to developments in the central village. These factors added to the confusion and disruption caused by the Food-for-Work and destitute relief programmes, which made regular, if unpredictable, appearances.

1 This idea is reminiscent of the Specially Elected members of Parliament.

2 "Why some self-help projects never get completed", Mmegi wa Dikgang, III, 16 (29 SEP 72)

3 VDC Minutes, 16 AUG 72 - 25 JUL 73, passim

4 Ibid., 20 MAY 70, 23 SEP 70, 11 AUG 71

Inevitably the emphasis on "hiring rather than doing" grew, and the MP in particular came up with offers of large sums of money from the largest trader and the Mine Labour Organisation in neighbouring Mahalapye¹ - both of which were sources of funds for the successful Mahalapye Central VDC. Another initiative taken by the MP was to bring a team to arrange for the sale of Chibuku beer with a levy going to the VDC.² As the councillor (the MP's brother) was an influential member of the Ngwato Land Board, Kalamare did indeed look like the model of "patron" politics, with a decreasing level of popular participation.

(v) Makwate: dismal saga

EA Population: 702; Dwellings 165 (111 occupied)

Facilities: Churches - UCCSA: VDC

Establishments: 1

Situated a similar distance from Mahalapye but literally on the other side of the tracks, Makwate could hardly have been more different from Kalamare, apart from the fact that it was also located in a staunchly BDP ward.³ The internal organisation of the VDC was poor, with few decisions recorded in the minutes but much discussion and some mutual recrimination. The election, initially, of an illiterate treasurer cannot have helped. The Headman originally was reported not to be a member, nor was the head teacher,⁴ while the councillor, who was non-resident, made no recorded contribution.

Grave difficulties were encountered in getting the members, let alone the villagers, to turn up for meetings,⁵ or participate in self-help projects,

1 Ibid., 26 SEP 73

2 Ibid., 19 MAY 69; CDA Monthly Report, MAY 69. This replicated the arrangement between the company and the Town Councils. The manager of the brewery was a nominated BDP councillor on Gaborone Town Council.

3 Mookane, where the Opposition (BIP) polled a mere 2.2% in 1966, returned a BDP councillor unopposed in 1969 and 1974.

4 CDA (Mookane) Monthly Report, MAY 69

5 "Of the 18 VDC members I only know six. Even of the six only about four attended meetings. Meetings were a flop. Kgotla meetings were a worse flop. Headman far from interested in his village development work, always has a lame excuse." (Ibid.)

and even the Food-for-Work scheme worked badly.¹ Indeed the only bright spot was the successful raising of funds for the ceremonial opening of the school, which had been built with a grant from a South African mission. The ceremony itself occasioned a visit from the local councillor - a rare event indeed.

Successive CDAs were very conscientious in their attempts to resuscitate and organise the VDC, making repeated visits for the purpose. In attempts to resolve the impasse, the CDA appealed to the local MP (who was active in Mahalapye) to come and organise fresh elections, which was "his responsibility," and was disappointed when there was no response.² Eventually the CDA turned to the PTA as the only active organisation in the village and put his efforts into it as an alternative to the VDC.³

The root cause of the unco-operative reaction of the villagers to all appeals to implement self-help projects was finally uncovered by the long-suffering CDA. It turned out that the Headman customarily held the money from collections, and that disputes concerning these funds dated back to 1964, but had been carried over into the new VDC system.⁴ With the election of a new committee in 1972, chaired by the village shopkeeper, the efficiency of the VDC showed signs of improving; but the legacy of suspicion of financial irregularities remained the pervasive factor.

(vi) Mahalapye: quasi-urban Hochpolitik

Population: 11,377 (de facto), 14,657 (de jure); Dwellings: 2,312 (1,876 occupied)

Facilities: Churches - Roman Catholic, Lutheran Church, UCCSA, Seventh Day Adventist, ZCC [Zionist], St. Peter's, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Spiritual Healing Church, Assemblies of God

1 Ibid., NOV 68

2 Ibid., MAY 69

3 Ibid., JUN 69

4 CDA (Mookane), Monthly Report, MAY 69 and Annual Report, 1971

(Resident Preacher); Health - Hospital, Clinic; Government Offices: District Officer, Revenue Office, Immigration Office, Information, Education, Veterinary Department, Agriculture, Central Transport Organisation; Air Strip; Railway station; Banks; 3 Schools - Standard 7, 1 Secondary School; Garages; Mine Labour Organisation; Hotel; Grind Mills; 2 ADs; Cattle Crush; Brigade Centres; Senior Sub-Tribal Authority; 1972 Settlers Association; Customary Court; VDC; Madiba Builders Brigade - textiles, mechanics, carpentry; Inspector of Works, Civil Aviation, Community Development, Police, Customs, Agricultural College; Magistrate; Roads Department, Water Affairs.
Establishments: 46

Mahalapye is very different from the other villages. In population it is almost as big as Lobatse (which rates a Town Council); it is bigger than most District headquarters, and it was once the main railway centre of the country. In the official terminology of Botswana¹ however it is a "big village" rather than a "town", since the writ of the traditional administration runs in Mahalapye. In modern terms it is administered as two wards of the Central District and has a District Administration office. The Central VDC in certain respects has taken on the appearance of a community council, not just a development committee.

This is evidenced by the calibre of the leading members, who have included the councillor, two MPs, the Senior Chief (Subordinate Tribal Authority), future councillors, future chiefs/headmen, an ex-Cabinet Minister, and parliamentary and council candidates.

The most spectacular achievement of the VDC has been the erection of a large but badly-designed and expensive community centre. The VDC decided on the project and were committed to it before the District Council was approached for funds by a delegation including the then

¹ The Setswana word "motse" really means a village or place, without distinction of size; the loan-word "tôrôpô", derived from the Afrikaans word "dorp", indicates a European-style settlement.

national Vice-President of the BNF, Dr. Kenneth Koma. The Council decided to support it but were faced with a ministerial veto.¹ The BDP MP, Mr. G. K. Koma, as well as his relative Dr. K. Koma, were largely instrumental in raising a relatively vast sum of money from local businessmen and the Mine Labour Organisation,² and eventually also from international aid donors; in the end the cost of the project ran into five figures. The opinion in Serowe was that the Community Centre was planned as the town hall of a future town council.³

Even before the Community Centre was finished, plans were going ahead for a new Mahalapye Secondary School⁴ with Dr. Koma as manager. This private school was conceived as a community day school⁵ and doubtless it was hoped that the Government would in due course feel obliged to take it over. Another project was the "stadium" or sports ground, in addition to a host of less grandiose undertakings.

The last-mentioned were largely the responsibility of the sub-VDCs for the Mahalapye North and South Polling Districts. The unusual three-VDC structure was the brain child of the CDA⁶ but suited the councillors.⁷ The Mahalapye South⁸ VDC, led by the Councillor elected in late 1972, behaved more like the VDCs examined in other smaller villages.

1 CDC Minutes, 24-25 MAR 71, 16-17 SEP 71

2 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 5 JUN 72

3 See pp. 192-193 above

4 Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 21 JUN 72

5 It thus complemented the fairly new "Swaneng movement" Madiba School on the outskirts of Mahalapye.

6 CDA (Mahalapye) Monthly Report, DEC 69

7 Strangely it was criticised by visiting Cabinet Minister K. P. Morake in January 1970, at a VDC meeting (to which the local CDAs complained they were not invited) chaired by the Mahalapye MP. CDA (Mahalapye) Bi-monthly Report, DEC 69/JAN 70.

8 The records of the North VDC were not made available to the writer by Dr. Koma, the Minutes Secretary.

In summary, then, Mahalapye was dominated by a very effective alliance of the MP, the traditional administration (one of whom was MP for a nearby constituency), the Councillors and a leading BNF politician. They were given substantial support in money and materials by the biggest trader in the village, a South African.¹ Some help was provided by the various PTAs and by the District Administration; but the CDAs did not really require to do much after the initial launching except where the Food-for-Work scheme required them to play an administrative role.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

(vii) Molapowabojang: Inner circle

EA Population: 1,030; Dwellings: 214 (167 occupied)

Facilities: School - Standard 6; Red Cross, BCW; Co-operative Society Marketing Camp; Visiting Priests: Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, UCCSA.

Establishments: 1

Molapowabojang VDC displays certain similarities with its Kalamare opposite number. Like Kalamare it was dominated by the Headman - who again was Chairman - and his family (one of whom owned the village shop). In the case of Molapowabojang the Letshabo family accounted for no less than 53% of the attendances at the committee.² In internal efficiency too it rates fairly high, having the record for frequency of meetings (on average every three weeks), and recording assiduous correspondence with the District Council. A further similarity is the fact that the Headman was also local councillor from 1966 to 1969.

The difficulties encountered in mobilising the populace in Molapowabojang, however, were due in large measure to the different

1 See for instance BDN, 5 FEB 69, 11 FEB 69, 8 JUL 69, 6 AUG 69.

2 The Molapowabojang Minute Book recorded all attendances and absences.

political climate. As part of Gathwane ward, Molapowabojang returned a BNF councillor with large majorities in both 1969 and 1974¹ and the view was expressed by one of the VDC leaders that the BNF supporters in the area were negative. As the VDC leadership here was clearly identified with the BDP it is not surprising that the support given to it was lukewarm the further away from the kgotla one went. Popular distrust was due also in part to an old problem of accounting for funds raised a decade previously and involving "some three dignitaries of the village."²

In the circumstances the VDC looked to the Council as its main source of funds, but was assisted also by the (non-resident) BNF councillor who helped out with both cash and transport. This was not enough, however, and increasingly the energetic Head Teacher, who was also Vice-Chairman, turned to the PTA and successfully organised building projects through it instead, albeit reporting to the VDC on what was being done. Another organisation of some importance was the water syndicate, whose leadership was entirely separate from that of the VDC, and which liaised independently with the councillor and the BNF MP.³

(viii) Digawana: party differences

Population: 949; Dwellings: 191 (151 occupied)

Facilities: Churches - UCCSA, African Methodist Evangelical, Pentecostal Holiness Church (Resident Preacher), Assemblies of God (Visiting Preacher); Health - shared; School - Standard 7; Salaried Headman; Community Centre; AD; Cattle Crush; Water Supply - borehole, dams, river; BCW.

Establishments: 4

As Digawana forms part of the same Polling District as Molapowabojang the same remarks about support for the BNF apply. But in Digawana the

1 The BNF polled 86.6% in 1969 and 76.5% in 1974. The BDP had been unopposed in 1966.

2 VDC Minutes, 15 NOV 72

3 Who tabled several parliamentary questions on the subject.

VDC itself was divided. The Headman, who had stood unsuccessfully in 1969 for the Democratic Party in Gathwane ward and was VDC Vice-Chairman, was opposed by the prospective National Front candidate for the same ward and his family, culminating in an interview in the Botswana Daily News in which forthright criticisms were made by the same future BNF councillor.¹ The tensions in the committee were matched by a boycott of kgotla meetings called to discuss VDC matters, and the resignations, under pressure, of the Chairman and the Secretary.² The eventual outcome was the election of a complete outsider as chairman;³ the newly appointed CDA also moved in to try and restore harmony.

The lack of harmony in the VDC is reflected in stagnation. In particular the Chairman called few meetings and most of those that did take place were called at the request of the Community Development Officer in Kanye, the Ipelegeng Foreman, the Treasurer/Head Teacher, or the PTA. The most notable thing the VDC did was to take over the postal service, at the PTA's request.

A certain amount of building was done, but this was largely undertaken by professional builders. As in Molapowabojang, the VDC successfully turned to the Council for assistance, but despite this it found itself in financial difficulties in meeting bills.⁴

(ix) Good Hope: Women's rule in mini-capital

EA Population: 995; Dwellings: 198 (162 occupied).
Facilities: Churches - Methodist, Roman Catholic, UCCSA, Seventh Day Adventist; Health - clinic; School - Standard 7; Transport - bus daily; Water Supply - borehole, dam, well; AD; Cattle Crush; Red Cross, BCW; Chief and Customary Court.
Establishments: 4

1 BDN, 26 JUN 74

2 Digawana VDC Minutes, 8 APR 74

3 But he complained that people would not accept him because he was a Mokgatla.

4 Digawana VDC Minutes, 14 JAN 71, 1 FEB 72

In terms of party politics the nearby village of Good Hope was miles away. As the heart of Barolong territory it was a consistent BDP stronghold.¹ The problems which the VDC encountered are attributable to different sociological factors. The fact that the chairperson² was a woman, and that for part of its history so were the secretary and vice-chairman, may have had some effect: it is impossible to prove. The problems however seem much more directly linked with the unique combination of the dispersed settlement pattern of the Barolong farms (Good Hope's population is less than 500) and Good Hope's position as clan capital. This meant that ten headmen as well as the (Paramount) Chief were supposedly members. Chief Besele II wanted to reign but not necessarily to attend VDC meetings. As a result of the system the link with the kgotla was unsatisfactory; subsequent to this study Chief Besele was deposed by the Government for incompetence.³ An additional factor was the fact that Good Hope was in some senses already well provided with facilities owing to its status as "capital".⁴

The other potential leaders for various reasons played little part in the affairs of the VDC. This was due partly to the relatively high turnover of councillors (who were not resident in Good Hope proper in any case) and CDAs. The MP, also Minister of Education, lived in Gaborone

1 Unopposed in 1966 and 1974, the BDP polled 83.7% in 1969, and 89.7% in the September 1971 by-election, in the Council Polling District.

2 The Setswana term "modulasetilo" is applicable equally to male and female chairmen.

3 This was the first time since independence that a "Paramount" Chief was actually deposed. See p. 37 above.

4 An illustration of the preferential treatment was the annual allocation of Independence Day grants, whereby Good Hope received the second highest grant in the District, ten times higher than other small villages. SDC Minutes, 1-4 SEP 70.

and had to pay more attention to the urban part of his Lobatse/Barolong constituency. Thus, although the VDC was run competently enough, it made little impact on the farmers around the village, and relied on collaboration with the Food-for-Work scheme to achieve its targets.¹

CONCLUSIONS

It has been felt necessary to explore in some detail the activities and practices of VDCs. The apologia for this is threefold. Firstly the record sometimes conflicts with the recollection of villagers (for example in recalling the date of the foundation of the VDC; or who was responsible for completing a project, the council or the village; and whether this was done on a do-it-yourself basis or against payment in cash or kind).² These are fairly important matters to get right. Secondly the very complexity of the situation at the grassroots had to be brought out, if only to warn against the danger of drawing facile conclusions or making too sweeping generalisations. In the third place it was necessary to see whether one could distil any kind of constitutional theory about VDCs, in both internal and external relations; it is worth noting in this context that the Minister of Local Government & Lands, in answer to a Parliamentary question in 1972, declined to set out any constitutional guidelines.³

One of the theoretical confusions surrounding VDCs is the question of whether they are in essence village councils or development associations.⁴ As Wass points out, a curious - but one might ask

1 BDN, 7 JUN 74

2 Tennent confirms the absence of proper statistics on VDC projects (op. cit., p. 68)

3 Hansard No. 40, p. 103 (14 MAR 72)

4 Zambia solved the problem by having both Ward Councils and Ward Development Committees. Republic of Zambia, Village Productivity and Ward Development Committees (Lusaka, 1971)

Freudian? - slip occurs in the wording of the Community Development Department's original Project Application Form: the form was to be signed by the "Chairman of Village Council",¹ whereas what was meant was the VDC Chairman. The "village council" concept underlies the stress on election by the whole village, rather than simply by those interested (which might be just as effective in terms of getting action). Moreover a number of villages have seen the VDC as in a superior position vis-à-vis other organisations and this legitimacy is presumably derived from election. Against this must be set the Government's fear of political party involvement in VDCs,² which it fears might hamper VDC development activities; the ex officio membership of the local CDA; and the tendency of other VDCs to regard themselves as merely one of a number of committees concerned with development in the village. Assessment of the performance of VDCs depends on the criteria used: are they judged by their efficiency in seeing projects through, or by the extent to which the village people participate? The two need not co-incide.³

Where the two strands converge is in the idea of mobilisation. Without exception VDCs rely on the kgotla (convened by the headman) to contact the people. The more "successful" VDCs in one sense may be those that have failed in the attempt to mobilise the mass of the people and instead have resorted to raising money from the better-off, or from

1 Wass, op. cit., p. 403. The form was designed to be countersigned by the CDA.

2 Discussed in the next chapter.

3 For a useful discussion of this point, see A. Osborne, "Rural Development in Botswana: a qualitative view" (unpublished Master's thesis, Centre of Southern African Studies, York University [England] [n.d.]), pp. 42-43 and passim; and summary thereof, appearing with the same title in the Journal of Southern African Studies, 11, 2 (1976).

external sources, in order to hire builders. Other VDCs, faced with similar problems, may have persevered with the kgotla, the headman and the traditional system generally, by assigning responsibility for action and/or fund raising to the sub-kgotla (i.e. traditional wards, through their sub-headmen), and by threatening sanctions against non-co-operative villagers. The net effect may have been more in line with the idea of "self-reliance". Either approach can be commended, or the reverse, according to the criteria used.

A rather different criterion is fairness. Chambers & Feldman were concerned at the regressive nature of flat-rate levies,¹ while Tennent sees the danger that VDCs and the pressure on villagers to contribute voluntary labour and cash may result in exploitation or the "self-destitution" of the rural population to help put up expensive basic infrastructure (particularly given seasonal shortages in manpower).² Tennent would prefer to see the "spirit of self-help" stressed rather than VDCs' administrative efficiency.³

As far as the Government is concerned, a further factor is added to the equation: the future of the traditional system. If VDCs are to be effective in terms of physical development, they must in most cases rely on the headman's authority (to imply or invoke sanctions, even if he cannot correctly apply them) and this in turn strengthens the traditional system. Yet one strand in BDP policy undoubtedly is the democratisation of rural government and the progressive elimination of the powers and status of the aristocracy. One possible way out is the election of

1 Chambers & Feldman, op. cit., pp. 188-189

2 Tennent, op. cit., p. 49

3 Ibid., p. 48

headmen - a process already in train. The dilemma, as yet unperceived, is that headmen elected for life may, first of all, be drawn from the hereditary ruling class and, secondly, thus acquire such additional prestige that they will exercise more, not less, authority in connection with a VDC which is supposed to be elected annually.

A feature of VDCs which is of particular interest is their composition. Are they, in their membership, more representative of the people than are the more "middle class"¹ councillors? Or are they the vehicle for a plutocracy? The table which follows indicates the share of elected positions on the VDCs studied, firstly by people described as "ordinary farmers"² (without another source of income)³ and housewives (who were also not employed otherwise nor the wives of the better-off); secondly, the proportion of (all) women is given.

TABLE 6.5

Percentage share of membership of VDCs

	All elected members		Officebearers	
Peasants	(a)	58	(b)	41
Women	(c)	27	(d)	18

Note: The range covered in the boxes is as follows:

(a) 30% (Mahalapye Central) - 84% (Digawana)

(b) 10% (Kalamare) - 60% (Digawana)

(c) nil (Masunga) - 52% (Good Hope)

(d) nil (Masunga, Tsamaya, Mahalapye South) - 50% (Good Hope)

The above figures compare with those calculated on a slightly different

1 Pace J. D. Holm, "Rural Development in Botswana: three basic political trends" (1972), pp. 85-88. (See following chapter for discussion on this point.)

2 Excluding what Shivji calls "rich peasants" (wakulima-tajiri) in Tanzania. For an attempt at a class analysis of Tanzania see I. G. Shivji, Class Struggles in Tanzania (1976), *passim*.

3 As in the Scottish crofting counties, many wage-earners are also active in agriculture, part-time.

basis by the Botswana Extension College survey, which produced the following:

TABLE 6.6

Percentage share of membership of VDCs

	All members	Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer
Farmers, Housewives) Not employed)	53	64
Teachers	22	14
Female	13	14

Source: Botswana Extension College Survey¹

Some of the differences reflect the different basis of calculation; others are probably due to the different sample populations.

The BEC Survey also produced data on education, showing that one-fifth of VDC members reporting had never attended school while one-third had completed primary education (with little variation between the main officebearers and the total). The principal officebearers were considerably better educated than their (male) age group: 43% of the under-40s and 23% of the over-40s had completed their primary education, compared with the national (male) figure of 15.2% and 3.1% respectively; the mean age of VDC members (again with insignificant differences between the main officebearers and the total) was 46.

It is evident then that the VDCs are not microcosms of village society, and that men, and those not classifiable as ordinary farmers,

1 Derived from Etherington - II, op. cit., Tables 1 and 6

2 Ibid., p. 3 and Tables 2, 3, 7 and 8

occupy a disproportionate share of places on the committees. But does this make VDCs a plutocracy? Here the findings of Kuper that "the correlation between wealth and political influence is slight"¹ are confirmed by a comparison of the membership of the VDCs with fiscal data indicating the number of those paying the maximum rate of Local Government tax (R48 per annum) and the holdings of cattle. There is some correspondence between the two lists but it is - especially if one excludes the ex officio members of VDCs - fairly slight, in all cases.² What Kuper reports for Kuli is borne out in general by the nine villages studied: "Some of the wealthy villagers . . . have no political influence, while some of the influential men . . . are only moderately wealthy by village standards."³ As regards big cattle owners - and the concept of "big" varies from district to district - there is even less correspondence with VDC membership than is the case with shopkeepers. Curtis's explanation - that they are typically preoccupied with their grazing areas and hence frequently away from the village - is a persuasive one.⁴

Membership of a VDC in any case does not automatically confer - although it may indicate - influence, let alone real power. Kerven reports that the wealthy members of a village are viewed with suspicion,⁵ and concludes that the assumption of a "demonstration effect" may be unfounded.⁶ The influence which members of a VDC may possess chiefly concerns the selection of projects, and here the vested interests of teachers and CDAs are revealed. But the authority of the VDC over the

1 Kuper, Kalahari Village Politics (1970), p. 87

2 See Appendix G

3 Kuper, op. cit., p. 87. (The word "moderately" is an important qualification: the broad stratum of semi-destitutes exerts little influence at any level.)

4 Curtis, op. cit., pp. 73-74

5 Kerven, op. cit., p. 10. (This may well prove atypical of Botswana as a whole however.)

6 Ibid., p. 11. Curtis (op. cit., passim) makes this point at some length.

people depends very largely on its impact on the kgotla (and the attendance at the latter), and VDCs in all cases have had to struggle to mobilise the people to implement decisions. Moreover rival organisations, notably PTAs, can be much more effective than VDCs. The idea that the VDC can be used as an instrument of control is wide of the mark, as is, in general, the idea of a political party's setting out to capture control of VDCs, thereby providing the local councillor with a power base. (The role and organisation of parties at the grassroots is discussed in the following chapter.) What can be asserted with some confidence is that the VDC tends to give most weight to the interests of those near the centre of the village, and that the problems experienced in implementing projects tend to increase with distance from the centre.

In denying that VDCs in general can be viewed as councillors' power bases in the villages, one is faced with the question then, what exactly is the role of councillors, vis-à-vis VDCs? Three points can be made here. Firstly, some councillors did undoubtedly play a leading role in the VDCs and can be described as "patrons" in the sense of providing leadership and assistance. Secondly, those that did were invariably residents of the village in question and could be said to be acting as villagers rather than councillors. Moreover they did not display the same level of activity in the other villages they represented. The variable thus appears to be ease of (verbal) communication, reinforced no doubt by the social ties of membership of a particular village community. This is equally true of MPs. Thirdly, the ceremonial aspect was important (for councillors and MPs): their attendance at any big event, and in a prominent position.¹ An illustration of this is a VDC officebearer who,

¹ Which usually means seated on a chair - the equivalent of being on a platform party - instead of on the ground.

after his election as district councillor,¹ became a markedly less active participant in VDC meetings but made a point of attending all ceremonial occasions.

An attempt has been made to distinguish between the "patron" and "broker/middleman" roles of councillors. It must be admitted however that this distinction has been difficult to sustain in practice. One reason is probably that councillors did not themselves see their roles as so divided. Instead they usually refer to themselves as "representatives". As has been noted earlier,² this concept is interpreted by councillors and observers in various ways, but the typical pattern is somewhat Bagehotesque, rather than being reminiscent of the machine politics from which the "broker" concept is derived. Another interpretation of councillors' role vis-à-vis the villages is hierarchical, and would account for the importance of ceremony: it seems likely that the status conferred by the position of councillor (and likewise MP and Minister) is perceived as being akin to the hierarchical structure of the traditional administration.

Even where councillors are anxious to establish themselves as middlemen they have formidable obstacles to overcome. Far from being able to monopolise information flows,³ they must compete for space in a multi-channelled flow of information involving CDAs, Council Staff, Government officers, headmen, VDC officebearers etc.. To be successful in such competition councillors need to be exceptionally well-informed and well-versed in administrative procedures: a not impossible task, but

1 For Kalamare

2 Particularly on pp. 51-53

3 As alleged by Vengroff, op. cit., Abstract, second page. Vengroff's assertion is contradicted by Curtis, op. cit., p. 163

one which is not performed by very many councillors. It is not surprising that many are content with a dignified rather than an aggressive position.

Increasingly the trend over the period studied has been the bureaucratisation of village-district communications. This is due partly to the fairly high volume of direct correspondence between council secretaries and VDCs, but has been accentuated by the growth of council staff concerned with development matters, the advent of District Development Committees (including District Officers[Development]), all of whom, like council secretaries, have spent increasing amounts of time in touring the villages. Finally the transfer of CDAs to the council staff has given councils resident officials in or near most villages.

In spite of all this there is still much room for improvement in communication and planning, since "The more deeply the Government becomes involved in developing illiterate communities the more muddle will be encountered."¹ Councillors are only one group among the personnel who could help to dispel the muddle. One of the snags is that the Government itself - e.g. by launching a Food-for-Work scheme, or the Accelerated Rural Development Programme, at short notice - can throw everything into confusion, the effects often lasting for a considerable time. The Government could do much to help realise the ambitions it has in its rhetoric frequently reiterated for the VDCs as an institution.

In conclusion two points should be made. One is the importance of geographical factors, which are at least as important as party politics. These include the fact of residence of principal actors, and the gradual disintegration of the fabric of rural society, with more and more people residing for longer and longer periods away from the village centre.²

1 Tennent, op. cit., p. 20

2 See R. Silitshena, Preliminary Notes on some Characteristics of Households and the Population that is Settled Permanently at the Lands in the Kweneng District (1977), p. 16

The other is the importance of the purely personal factor: some of the achievements catalogued above are due in large measure to the energy and imagination of one or two individuals. The converse is most evidently also true.

CHAPTER 7

POLITICAL PARTY ORGANISATION

There are special difficulties involved in obtaining data on party organisation in Botswana. There are various reasons for this. For one, the quest for party organisation is reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes's inquiries after the celebrated dog that didn't bark in the night;¹ an even more apt analogy in many places may be Mearns's equally celebrated "man upon the stair".² Confirmation of this is provided in part by the Tordoff Committee's concern for the need to "strengthen the organisation of the governing party, which, over most of the country, is the only effective political party,"³ while Curtis, commenting on two solidly BDP villages (in the Southern and Kweneng Districts respectively), states categorically:

Political parties are not conspicuous in the villages. The ruling party in Botswana has a commanding position, so that activity between elections is minimal. The opposition, though legal, tends to be secretive. . . . the level of political party activities in the village is so low between elections that alliances in village affairs do not necessarily follow lines of party allegiance.⁴

The distinction Curtis makes here between the ruling party and the opposition gives a clue to the other major difficulty inherent in ascertaining details of party organisation. This was the only question

1 I.e. the dog was there but had a good reason for not barking.

2 "As I was going up the stair
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today. . . ." (Hughes Mearns, The Psychoed)

3 Tordoff, Pilane & Sarpong, Report of the Local Government Study Group (1970), p. 9

4 D. Curtis, "Ideology and the Impact of Development Agency Activity" (1977), p. 154

on which interviewees were reluctant to give details, amounting on occasion to a blank refusal, expressed in the form of a question, "Why do you want to know?" Two explanations suggest themselves for this uncharacteristic reticence. One is simply embarrassment, in cases where there is in reality no branch or constituency organisation. The other is the colonial legacy of regarding politics as a dirty word: political parties in the days of the Protectorate were almost automatically suspect and assumed to be subversive organisations. As an aspect of this, opposition politicians in particular are aware of the existence of the police Special Branch and its historically established interest in compiling dossiers on political activists.¹ It is however of limited interest to obtain names of members of a "branch" which does not normally meet at all,² and whose main function is to provide signatures on nomination papers every four or five years.

Related to this point is the practical difficulty of defining what is meant by a "member" of a political party. Even if one could obtain access to membership files these would indicate those who had actually paid an annual subscription (20 cents in the case of the BDP). Some of those would reflect the exceptional activity of the leading party man in the area (say, the MP) while excluding, in many areas, those who were publicly identified with a particular party but had not paid their

¹ Instances of this are documented by H. M. Tapela, "The Tati District of Botswana 1866-1969", pp. 297-298; and R. P. Stevens, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, (1967), p. 155

² In one village the BDP committee consisted of the two District Councillors, two of their relatives, and two others who were normally resident elsewhere. (The Treasurer, an ex-candidate for the Council, lived 30 miles away while the Secretary worked in Johannesburg.)

subscription in a particular year. Vengroff testifies to the difficulties encountered (even in a relatively "active" period and district), in persuading supporters to pay their dues to the ruling party.¹

Despite reluctance to give details of party membership in specific locations, some generalities can be noted. Opposition leaders tend to take refuge in rather grandiose claims of constituency organisation in all constituencies, even if the party in question has failed to contest more than a fraction of the seats at Parliamentary or Council level. But some general political activity can be noted, especially by the BNF (in the bigger centres of population, notably Gaborone,) in 1968-69² and in one or two villages such as Molapowabojang (Southern District), while the BPP does maintain a visible level of organisation³ in certain wards of Francistown. In the towns the tradition of meeting in the "Freedom Squares" is an important one and dates back to the days when the nationalist movement exercised its right of freedom of speech in a particular open space, not the kgotla. Freedom Square meetings are a fairly regular occurrence in the urban centres and are held by BDP and Opposition alike. MPs and Ministers are prominent in such meetings and even the President himself, despite his increasing tendency to cultivate a Head of State image, was not above making Freedom Square speeches before the '69 Election.⁴

Public meetings aside, national leaders of the ruling party are fairly frank about the gap between the desired and the actual levels of

1 R. Vengroff, "Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana" (1972), p. 181

2 BDN, passim

3 It also sent an organiser round the remote West prior to the 1969 election, with some success in the Local Government elections. The unfortunate official almost perished of thirst when he became stranded in the Kalahari. BDN, 12 MAY 69.

4 Ibid., 16 OCT 69

Domkrag activity. One minister stated that liaison, which was badly lacking, could be provided by constituency committees but that these rarely met although MPs could call them together. In essence the BDP maintains a national infrastructure, including some very competent national office bearers in Gaborone and offices in Serowe, Mahalapye, Palapye (Central District), Kanye (Southern District) and Francistown. Only the last mentioned has had a professional organiser.¹ The others, manned by clerical staff, are almost an embarrassment to the party in their under-utilisation. The Mahalapye office has occasionally been used for VDC meetings,² while the Serowe office awaits word from Gaborone of such occasions as ministerial visits. They have stocks of posters, membership cards etc. and are glad to see visitors! The practical philosophy of the Democratic Party on organisational matters is a mixture of laissez faire and decentralisation: it is really left to local party members to regulate their own activities and although MPs and Councillors are seen as having a leading role to play they are not under any pressure to give an account of their lack of activity.³

This decentralisation extends to the organisation of by-elections. The local branch is expected to find the deposit (although Headquarters is prepared to step in if strictly necessary). In this connection the BDP's proud boast never to have lost a deposit has to be viewed against the low percentage (5%) required to save it, and the fact that it has on at least two occasions failed to nominate a candidate for a District

1 Until he, embarrassingly, fell from grace and had to resign.

2 See Mahalapye Central VDC Minutes, 10 JUL 70

3 One persistent critic of the lack of party support for councillors was L. M. Seretse, now an MP and Cabinet Member and formerly Central District Council Secretary. See his Report on Third Tour of the Central District, 9-21 NOV 72; and J. Wiseman, "The Organisation of Political Conflict in Botswana, 1966-73" (1976), p. 295.

Council by-election.¹ Exceptionally the national organisation was involved in supplying cyclostyled leaflets for a Francistown Town Council by-election in December 1970.

PARTY ACTIVITIES

Finance

In recent times² the finances of the opposition parties have been, as far as can be judged, rudimentary, making it impossible for them to run offices or employ full-time organisers to match the BDP. In fact the main source of financial support comes in the form of MPs' salaries and councillors' allowances; the elective process thus provides the personnel for party organisation. Other prominent party officebearers are self-employed, usually in commerce or in some cases as farmers, since the major employer - the state - debar civil servants, local government officers, teachers and para-statal organisation employees from public involvement in party politics.

These remarks apply equally to the BDP. But the party has from early on attracted the support of wealthy traders, notably Jimmy Haskins, who has held ministerial office since Independence, and Ben Steinberg, MP '65-'74 for Boteti; more recently Welly Seboni, manager of the Chibuku brewery and MP (for Gaborone & Ramotswa 1969-74, for Gaborone since 1974) has been a conspicuously well-off member. In addition most BDP MPs have considerable cattle holdings and many own stores. However the party has moved away from dependence on large donations

1 See above, p. 200. The party has also on one or two occasions given support to an Independent candidate, usually a minister of religion. "Baemedi Ba Domkrag Tlhophong E E Tlang Seetebosigo 13" [Democratic Party Candidates in the Forthcoming Elections on 13th June], Therisanyo/Consultation IV, 4 (MAY 66), p. 4

2 In the early '60s finance was a cause of serious friction within the BPP, leading to a three-way split. See J. Halpern, South Africa's Hostages (1965), pp. 289-290.

with the construction of Tsholetsa House (at a cost of R200,000) on a prime site in central Gaborone.¹ The calculation was that rents from letting out part of the building would clear the debt (raised largely by a party appeal) and provide a guaranteed, regular, independent income.² Party subscriptions³ are small beer in comparison: Domkrag MPs are issued with six membership registers apiece. Party fêtes in the main centres are another, well publicised, source of income. Assistance has been given to the party also by the West German Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which has rented office space in Tsholetsa House.

Publications

Party publications are conspicuous by their absence. At one time there were three periodicals⁴ - Masa [The Dawn], published by the BPP; Puo Phaa [Straight Talk] published by the BNF; and Therisanyo/Consultation, the organ of the BDP. Puo Phaa never resumed regular publication after the sedition case in 1967⁵ and the other two have quietly ceased to appear.⁶ The reason why Therisanyo (with a circulation of 5,000) was discontinued was given by a senior member of the BDP as follows: "It was too much Gaborone-based - a repetition of the Daily News." In other words the BDP, once it was securely the ruling party, did not feel a need for a party organ.

In any case the ideological content of the various party publications was virtually divorced from any connection with local government or

1 BDN, 18 JUL 74

2 The Government obligingly helped to ensure the realisation of this ambition by moving the Ministry of Commerce & Industry into Tsholetsa House not long after the 1974 General Election. BDN, 19 DEC 74

3 Vengroff reported membership figures ranging from four to 200 in various Council Wards in the Kweneng District in 1970. Vengroff, op. cit., p. 180

4 All four parties produced, very infrequently, occasional pamphlets.

5 Held at Mahalapye, 19-21 DEC 67. See above, pp. 24-25.

6 Except for an Election Special edition of Therisanyo in 1974.

rural development issues, dealing instead with national and international politics. Indeed political education as such, at any level, has been almost wholly lacking in Botswana.¹

One is prompted to ask, then, what do partisans do all day? One outlet is attendance at Annual Conferences,² which are important particularly in settling the leadership of the BNF. In the case of the other three parties they are essentially treated as a forum for speeches from the party leader.³

Party competition of course is not wholly lacking at the grassroots. As an example, in a village where the People's Party were entrenched, but in an increasingly marginal parliamentary constituency, the number of public political meetings held in the five months leading up to the 1974 General Election was five, two held by the BPP and two by the BDP⁴ plus a Presidential visit which was officially treated as non-political.⁵ Such intense activity is however typical only of pre-election periods and in Opposition and marginal seats at that.⁶ It is indicative moreover that party political broadcasting on Radio Botswana is confined

1 There have been signs, after the 1974 elections, that the BDP has become aware of the deficiency and has started to hold a series of seminars. See BDN, 28 JUN 76

2 Moreover the costs of holding and attending the conference necessitate a modest flurry of local party fund-raising activity. For BDP examples, see BDN 17 FEB 70 (Kweneng), 14 JAN 71 (Ngami) and 31 JAN 74 (Serowe).

3 Sir Seretse's Presidential Addresses to the BDP Annual Conference, usually reprinted for circulation, read like his addresses to the National Assembly and often deal with the international position of the Republic as much as its internal problems. (Latterly also an occasion for a formal address by a UNIP fraternal delegate.)

4 Eyewitness accounts from Mapoka. Dates of meetings: BPP, 19 MAY and 12 AUG; BDP, 17 AUG and 3 OCT; President's visit 29 AUG 74.

5 And as such attended by the BPP MP, K. M. Nkhwa, Councillors of both parties, and members of the two local VDCs, with transport provided by the North East District Council.

6 This is corroborated by CDAs' reports (one of the questions they are asked to answer is the number of visits by MPs or Ministers).

to general election campaigns: the *raison d'être* of parties is generally perceived as the organisation of elections.

CANDIDATE SELECTION

Clearly the nomination and selection of candidates is an important aspect of party activity. The procedure in all four parties is similar, the main difference between the Democratic Party and the opposition parties lying in the greater degree of formality in the BDP approach. In all cases the local party organisation is asked to suggest one or more possible candidates for the appropriate ward/constituency. These names are then submitted to the party leadership (in the BDP case, the National Executive Committee), which makes the final selection, on the basis of its knowledge of the suggested candidates. Where the party in question holds the Parliamentary seat the MP is the most important link in the chain of selection for Council candidates, and this is seen clearly in the Tati West (now North East), Mahalapye, Shoshong and Lobatse/Barolong constituencies. BPP leader P. G. Matante, and Chief Bathoen of the National Front, virtually possessed the power of selection of candidates for their respective local Councils,¹ although elsewhere the BNF Central Committee did exercise control. In Borolong - safe Domkrag territory - the key figure was B. C. Thema, MP, a senior Cabinet Minister from the Party's advent to power and also a member of the small BDP election committee (which included the national organising staff and a few ministers).

The Democratic Party was well aware of the much greater amount of patronage it had at its disposal (compared with the other parties) and did not flinch from dropping unsuitable candidates - or, less frequently, those who had fallen out of favour with someone in the party hierarchy.

¹ I.e. North East District Council, Francistown Town Council and the Southern District Council.

In 1969, for instance, in the Central District the sitting BDP councillor for Mookanewas was dropped, as was the councillor for Kalamare and one of the Mahalapye councillors, while the same occurred in the Gathwane and Good Hope wards of the Southern District. A detailed examination of each case shows that failure to make an impact, either on the Council or in the villages, was what carried weight more often than the desire to bring in a more favoured candidate. But the more active the local MP, the more often the latter occurred: in the absence of strong representations from him the tendency was to readopt a candidate (particularly a successful one electorally) who was willing to serve again.

The most conspicuous examples of "party boss" influence over nominations in fact came from other parts of Botswana, notably the Kweneng¹ and the remote Ghanzi² and Kgalagadi districts. In the last-mentioned case the local MP, to the annoyance of party HQ, signed the nomination papers of his protégé as candidate for Gakhibane ward without authorisation from the National Executive Committee. The District Commissioner in Tsabong, as Returning Officer, accepted the papers as valid (there being no quick way of seeking confirmation from Gaborone and probably no apparent need to do so). As a result the sitting BDP councillor had to stand as an Independent - successfully as it turned out.

1 Here the leading light was E. M. K. Kgabo, Minister of Local Government & Lands. See Vengroff (*op. cit.*), especially pp. 190-199. The sitting MP for Molepolole North was very annoyed at being dropped in favour of a young protégé of Kgabo. For further information see Macartney, "The General Election of '69," Botswana Notes and Records, 3 ('71) p. 212

2 See A. Kuper, Kalahari Village Politics (1970), Ch. 3. Harry Jankie, an influential local councillor, got the National Assembly nomination in 1969 (at the second attempt) and was a very active party organiser.

RECRUITMENT OF CANDIDATES

Although there is now a fair amount of information available about the background and status of Members of Parliament, Councillors and candidates, none of it is complete. Data published by Holm¹ is based on interviews with almost two-thirds of the MPs and three-quarters of the Councillors in three districts² (about a quarter of all Councillors). It demonstrates that both groups (irrespective of party) are more wealthy, better educated and "bigger" farmers than the average Motswana. More recent information, derived from the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland study of the 1974 General Election and hitherto unpublished,³ is reproduced in Appendix D. The UBLS study succeeded in eliciting responses from very nearly half of all council candidates and hence is of very great interest. But several obstacles in particular are encountered in using the information. One is the multiple response to questions about occupational background, so that on average candidates have been in two or three categories (consecutively or concurrently), e.g. farmer and blue-collar worker. Another is the answer "Councillor" to the question on present occupation. And again the size of land farmed and/or cattle held are not related directly to the categories of occupation. What is still needed - it lay outwith the scope of this study - is an in-depth investigation of all candidates (for Local Government and Parliamentary elections) before one can start talking definitively in more precise terms, whether of class analysis or of other criteria (e.g. ascribed status, leadership of other groups, religion, etc.)

1 J. D. Holm, "Rural Development in Botswana: the basic political trends", Rural Africana, Fall 1972

2 Kgatleng, Southern and South-East Districts.

3 The writer is most grateful to Jack Parson, Department of Government & Administration, UBS (Gaborone), for kindly making this data available.

A further difficulty of particular relevance for this study is the lack of breakdown as between districts. An example is the BPP, which elected a substantial number of candidates to the North East District Council and Francistown Town Council; yet only one BPP respondent in the survey gave "councillor" as his occupation, indicating probably that the respondents were drawn from further south. Certainly the social background of BPP and BDP in the North East District was, in general, different: the bulk of the BDP councillors were businessmen, their opponents usually not. It may be possible to think in terms of a leisured class of public-spirited citizens (as in rural Scotland) but it is arguably more relevant to look at specific situations: villages and districts.

Even here an unexpected problem was the number of obscure candidates, who were virtually unknown to most of those supposedly knowledgeable local people interviewed: a rather puzzling phenomenon, given the small scale of Batswana politics. The most plausible explanation is that parties drafted in either unknown outsiders, or those whose local connections were tenuous, to be the local standard bearer; and there is evidence that this happened in a number of instances. Some of these can be described as perennial opposition candidates.¹

With all these qualifications made, there were clearly two main pools of talent which were tapped by political parties in their quest for candidates, and moreover the two pools were connected. The first is defined in terms of education. It is a statutory requirement that candidates for the National Assembly must be reasonably competent in English,² the official language of debates. For Councils it is obviously desirable, owing to the predominance of English in documents. It comes

1 See Macartney, "The General Election of 1969," op. cit., for the number of "crossover" candidates.

2 Constitution of Botswana, Section 62 (d)

as no surprise therefore to find that 81% of MPs in Holm's sample were former civil servants and/or teachers;¹ the BDP listed eleven of its thirty-one original candidates in 1965 as teachers or civil servants. A further eleven were listed as employees of the old Tribal Authorities.² After the first Assembly elections and the Local Government elections the following year, the predominant position of the Democratic Party became very clear. From then on any teacher or civil servant contemplating resigning in order to stand for election for an opposition party had to be mindful of the high risk of unemployment. Thus the doctrine of the non-political civil service has tended to make the BDP more closely identified with the civil service³ since most of those resigning to stand for election have done so on a BDP ticket - comprising 46% of all the party's "new" MPs.

In addition to teachers and civil servants the main occupational group from which candidates have been drawn is shopkeepers and Master Farmers, most if not all of whom are educated men. A particularly interesting regional grouping of the former is the Northern Botswana Traders Association. Its twenty-seven members⁴ included two Northern MPs (one of whom was Secretary), two North East District Councillors (one of whom, an ex-Parliamentary candidate for Tati West, was Chairman), one Central District Councillor, and a sub-Chief who was a

1 Holm, op. cit., p. 88

2 Therisanyo/Consultation, II, 2 (FEB 65) pp. 2-8. Seretse Khama was of course the most famous of the last-mentioned category.

3 A Permanent Secretary's wife stood for Gaborone Town Council on the BDP ticket (and subsequently became Mayor). Two Cabinet Ministers' wives were also candidates. An expatriate civil servant's wife who stood as an Independent for the same council - unsuccessfully - was subsequently nominated to it.

4 As at 26 APR 72. Two years later it had over 47 members (BDN, 22 APR 74).

nominated member of the North-East Licensing Authority; all six were BDP members.

The other pool of talent can be described as those who had already shown an interest in public affairs. Some of those were ministers of religion or leading church laymen, but the main body, in the earlier days of electoral activity, was the traditional administration, which had acquired a semi-democratic element through the election of Tribal Councillors (i.e. in the eight Tswana clans). The BDP's original candidates list included ten (out of thirtyone) who were shown as Tribal Councillors,¹ including Seretse Khama and Quett Masire. In more recent times a similar role has been performed by the Town and District Councils, whose members have provided 56% of the BDP's new candidates since the establishment of the Local Government system. As regards the District Councils studied, the two main sources under this section were the VDCs and the traditional administration, each the subject of a section to follow.

THE PARTIES AND THE TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Reference has already been made to the traditional system of administration as providing a source of candidates for local government and the National Assembly, and indeed Holm has put the percentage of aristocrats amongst the MPs and Councillors he surveyed as 47% and 59% respectively.² A few MPs, and a much larger number of District Councillors, continue to perform both traditional-administrative and elective-representative functions. The most celebrated example of the

1 Therisanyo/Consultation, III, 2 (FEB 65), pp 2-8

2 Holm, op. cit., p. 86. For what is here rendered as "aristocrats", - or members of ruling families - Holm has coined the term "bakosi" which he defines as those having paternal kinship ties with a local chief or headmen: he estimates this group as comprising 15%-20% of the [Tswana?] population.

former is the MP for Tswapong South who was simultaneously Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Chief (Subordinate Tribal Authority) of Mahalapye. When he resigned in the latter capacity he was succeeded by the District Councillor for Mookane, who was subsequently to be acting Chief (Tribal Authority) of all the Bangwato - a position which meant his relinquishing his Council seat for Mookane. When, in turn, his move to Serowe left a vacancy, an election was held in Mahalapye. The successful candidate was already the deputy sub-chief (Headman) for Mahalapye and a leading VDC member. In the poll for the Headman's position another active VDC member, who twice stood, very unsuccessfully, for a Mahalapye ward of the Central District Council on the Independence Party ticket, failed narrowly in his bid for the traditional position. Interestingly, his support in the election for the position of headman exceeded by a considerable margin the vote he polled as BIP candidate for the Council,¹ illustrating the importance of the party label - and, incidentally, the public's ability to distinguish between different kinds of election.

This was no isolated instance of the overlapping of modern party allegiance with traditional-style faction politics. The establishment of the BNF in the Southern District by ex-Chief Bathoen is the most prominent example of this process, but there are several others. Kuper's detailed study of faction politics in Kuli village in the Ghanzi District provides the basis for a fascinating case of interaction between the two. At the time of Kuper's field work it was possible to

1 The votes he polled were as follows:

- a) Council election, Mahalapye South 1966: 110 (9.0%) [straight fight]
- b) Headman election, Mahalapye, 1973: 221 (42.8%) [three-cornered fight]
- c) Council election, Mahalapye North, 1974: 56 (5.3%) [straight fight]

state that "In Northern Kgalagadi District the national political parties provided the basis for a new expression of opposition after Botswana's independence, but this has not happened in Ghanzi District." Yet in the 1969 elections the previously unsuccessful contender for the BDP nomination (and a "ruling family" member) for the District Council ward was able to win the seat for the People's Party, in what had previously appeared solid Domkrag territory, defeating another prominent (and wealthy) villager; the roles were reversed in turn in 1974 when another wealthy local man won the seat back for the BDP.²

The founder of the very first political party in Botswana (the short-lived Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party) provides another illustration of traditional-modern political interaction. L. D. Raditladi, who has been described as a "Ngwato aristocratic rebel"³ founded the BFPF as a conservative reforming party. But "the Ngwato tribal council, perhaps mistaking Raditladi's move as a bid for the Chieftainship, quickly gave him the position of Subordinate African Authority (sub-chieftainship) at Mahalapye . . . and he 'forgot politics'."⁴ However when the District Councils were inaugurated Raditladi made a bid for election as a BIP candidate, with notable lack of success (8% of the votes in Mahalapye North). After that it seems that "L. D." really did forget about party politics.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND VDCs

The official view, reiterated time and time again, is that there should be no connection whatsoever between political parties and VDCs:

1 Kuper, op. cit., p. 90

2 Ibid., pp. 83-86 and 181-182. The interesting point is the way in which village faction leaders were able to acquire a national party label in order to enter the District Council arena.

3 Tapela, op. cit., p. 293

4 Ibid., p. 294

the latter are to be "non-political" bodies elected without reference to the former.¹ If this is more than just rhetoric, there are several reasons which underlie the government line. One is undoubtedly the colonial heritage of regarding parties as not very respectable: at worst subversive, at best a necessary evil but in general out to disturb the smooth running of affairs by introducing party divisions.² Another, more realistic if not cynical, interpretation is that before "party" and "politics" is tacitly understood "opposition": in other words that party control by the BDP would be all right but opposition party activity definitely would not. In support of the suspicion of opposition parties, ruling party politicians have frequently accused all three opposition parties of opposing self-help and attempting to frustrate particular self-help schemes. The Minister of Local Government & Lands described the BPP as "barren of constructive proposals" and of being unworthy to "work for the planned development of [local] areas".³ For their part the Opposition MPs refute allegations of sabotage or obstruction,⁴ while continuing to express doubts about the principle of Ipelegeng.⁵

In support of the latter view Vengroff has alleged that VDCs in the Kweneng District were generally controlled by the BDP, and that the sole exception was summarily dismissed by the MP, who called for a fresh

1 Reflected in, for example, Chambers & Feldman, op. cit., p. 186; The Village Development Handbook, op. cit., p. 4; and S. J. Tennent, Report on the Community Development Department (n.d. [1974]), p. 21.

2 Party involvement is seen as unfortunate by both Chambers & Feldman (op. cit. p. 182) and Tennent (op. cit. p. 21)

3 Appendix A

4 E.g. K. M. Nkhwa, BPP MP (Tati West), in Hansard No. 42 (27 OCT 72) p. 123.

5 As has been seen, the term is ambiguous, giving rise to confused debate.

election.¹ A cause célèbre occurred in the large Central District village of Palapye. Here it appears that the old committee, dominated by the local BDP Councillor (a close associate of the MP for Tswapong North) and other Domkrag supporters, was replaced in an election by a predominantly BIP committee. The issue became complicated by allegations and counter-allegations concerning funds, and matters reached a high pitch with the circulation of a confidential report in the ministries in Gaborone. The local Community Development Assistant was hurt at being accused of failing in his duty of ensuring proper elections, or even of deliberately collaborating with the Independence Party, allegations which he indignantly rejected. At all events the pressure from the local MP was strong enough for the Minister of Local Government & Lands to step in and suspend the committee,² pending the holding of fresh elections. These two cases are exceptional but, firstly, illustrate the influence which a strong local "patron" MP can exercise³ and, secondly, cast doubts on the Democratic Party's commitment to local democracy.

Most of the time however VDCs plod along in a much less exciting manner and the VDCs in this study in general fall into this pattern. This does not mean that there is an absence of identifiable partisans on the VDCs: quite the contrary. In the cases of Mapoka, Mahalapye, Molapowabojang, Good Hope and Digawana there were members - in addition to the local councillors, who were by definition party members - who were publicly known as partisans through having stood for election to

1 Vengroff, op. cit., pp. 47-48. Unfortunately he gives no further details.

2 BDN, 9 JUL 74. The legal basis for such action remains a mystery, since VDCs are non-statutory bodies.

3 Both MPs were ministers.

the district council (and in one case the National Assembly). At no time was any official concern shown about any of these known politicians' membership of the VDC. Furthermore VDCs were a source of recruitment of candidates who got experience of public affairs through serving on them; examples are Mahalapye, Kalamare, Digawana, Mapoka and also Jackalas I in the North East, where the VDC Chairman got the BDP nomination for the Parliamentary constituency of Tati West in 1974. In solidly Opposition areas, moreover, it would be surprising if elections failed to produce a VDC which was not composed predominantly of opposition supporters. It would appear, then, that it was only when a local BDP MP felt that Opposition dominance of a VDC meant a loss of face for him and the party that the injunction against party involvement in VDCs was wheeled out and used against the offending committee.

Despite their worries about the incursion of party divisions into VDCs, Chambers and Feldman take the sensible view that "Any person who is active in support of a political party is also likely as a responsible citizen to be actively concerned to promote development in his area," and recommend "a national approach to rural development involving all parties and all people."¹ On the whole this is the philosophy which has been adopted by the Government in practice. If VDCs do increasingly take on the appearance of village councils it seems inevitable that this view should come to predominate.

¹ Chambers & Feldman, op.cit., pp. 182-183

PART III

THE NATIONAL LEVEL

CHAPTER 8

CENTRAL-LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

There are various possible ways of examining relations between the central Government and the District Councils. One could, for instance, explore the methods of control and communication, who determines priorities, the degree of flexibility or rigidity involved in the planning mechanism, and the overall allocation of resources of money, staff, materials and services. The decision to present this chapter in a mainly chronological manner arises from the conviction that the most striking thing about central-local government relations is their dynamics. The other analytical categories mentioned will be incorporated within the chapter at various - sometimes slightly arbitrary - points according to the period with which a particular aspect or theme was principally associated.

THE EARLY DAYS: SETTLING DOWN

The "revolutionary change"¹ in local government which occurred in 1966 was a very quiet one indeed. In the early days two considerations were uppermost in the minds of the Government. One was the establishment of the new system and its exposition to the new Councillors and staff - many of whom were recruited direct from the old traditional administration system. The other was the preoccupation with the chieftainship and its blending with the new district council system - hence the ex-officio chairmanship of the local Paramount Chief (where there was one). Likewise

1 According to A. S. Sillery, Botswana: a short political history (1974) p. 182

visits from the Minister of Local Government (initially Tsheko Tsheko) and other Government spokesmen tended to stress the continuity of the old and the new, so that the legitimacy attached to the Chief would transfer to the council. Repeated efforts were made to convince the lower ranks of the aristocracy, including the Headmen, that their position was unchanged and unchallenged by the election of District Councillors.¹ It was a great help to the Government that the ruling party nationally gained a majority of elected seats in all but one of the district councils, and even there (in the North East District Council) the Opposition was more hostile to the chieftainship than was the BDP. Only in one district - the Kgatleng - was there a strong Opposition party tacitly supported by the Chief.²

Following the appointment in October 1966 as Minister of Local Government & Lands of Mr. Englishman M. K. Kgabo, a more determined opponent of the chieftainship,³ the Government first encouraged and then legislated for the transfer of stray cattle (matimela) to the district councils,⁴ before going on to tackle the fundamental question of land allocation previously the prerogative of the chiefs.

Of great symbolic importance were the "cession sessions"⁵ at which the President personally attended Council meetings and explained why the Government wanted to take over from the principal clans the rights to the minerals which lay below clan land; the North East District, having

1 See above, p. 36

2 See J. A. Wiseman, "The Organisation of Political Conflict in Botswana 1966-73" (1976), p. 279 and passim. The BIP opposition in the North West District Council resembled the BPP in the North East, rather than the Kgatleng BPP.

3 See above, pp. 163-164 and 183

4 The Matimela Act 1968 (No. 25 of 1968), following the Matimela (Model) Bye-Laws, 1966 (L.N. No. 100 of 1966)

5 See above, pp. 128 and 183

no such rights to cede, missed out on this type of occasion. Other themes stressed in ministerial visits were the dependent position of councils - "I think you would be well advised to consult my Ministry before you make final consideration of matters which may be of far reaching importance", as the Minister of Local Government & Lands told Kgatleng District Councillors¹ - and staffing problems of both quality and quantity. This extract from another speech by Minister Kgabo illustrates the point:

It is unfortunately true that the present situation is in many ways far from satisfactory. . . . The District Councils are new, their Councillors and staff are largely inexperienced. . . . immediate improvement can - and indeed must - be effected. . . .²

VIP visits were a welcome sign to Councils that they were in touch with real people. For those Council Secretaries (and they were the majority) who had been used to working in close proximity with their superior - the Chief - the sense of isolation was strong. It was frequently complained that the staff of the Ministry of Local Government & Lands did not get round the districts sufficiently often.³ Instead Council Secretaries were in regular receipt of didactic lectures from Gaborone such as these: "Your minutes tend to be extremely long and detailed. It should be possible to be more brief and at the same time give the relevant details";⁴ "There is great scope for the improvement of the layout and content of your minutes",⁵ "Do the next set of minutes correctly and compare them with the model minutes in the Handbook";⁶

1 On 20 JUN 67

2 Opening Address to the District Commissioners' Conference, 23-24 OCT 67

3 This probably stemmed more from the small number of senior civil servants in the Ministry than from disinclination.

4 Permanent Secretary, MLG&L, to Secretary, Central District Council, 11 DEC 67

5 Permanent Secretary, MLG&L, to Secretary, Ngwaketse District Council, 26 OCT 66

6 Permanent Secretary, MLG&L, to Secretary, Ngwaketse District Council, 27 NOV 67

"Was the Council dormant for 6 months?";¹ "Although these minutes are not as late as some have been in the past - two months . . . is still a quite unacceptable delay."²

As chief representative of the Central Government in the district the District Commissioner was also brought into the act, but the impact was hardly more personal. One District Commissioner wrote a five-page letter on the subject to the Council Secretary, complaining at the length of minutes (20 pages for an average statutory meeting);³ he in turn received complaints from his superiors in the Ministry of Local Government & Lands such as these:

With reference to the minutes of the above meeting [of the Central District Council] I confess that I am quite unable to understand why no notice whatever is taken of the hand-book, the model minutes and the instructions for writing them issued by the Minister as a directive.

.
. . . is there any way of persuading those concerned to read and apply them?⁴

While the expatriate civil servants who wrote all the above messages⁵ seemed to despair of making Batswana Local Government officers conform to the English local government norm,⁶ the reaction of the Council Secretaries and Chairmen was restrained,⁷ and produced little difference in the conduct and recording of meetings, which were rooted in the kgotla traditional modes of debate, in which the fact of contribution to discussion was as important as the outcome.

1 Permanent Secretary, MLG&L, to Secretary, Ngwaketse District Council
31 JUL 67

2 Permanent Secretary, MLG&L, to Secretary, Ngwaketse District Council
19 FEB 68

3 District Commissioner [Serowe] to Secretary, Central District Council
25 AUG 67

4 Permanent Secretary, MLG&L, to District Commissioner, Serowe, 22 APR 68

5 Although all letters to and from the Ministry were officially communications from the Permanent Secretary who was a Motswana from an early date.

6 Explicitly recognised in letter referred to in footnote 3 above

7 E.g. Central District Council Secretary to Permanent Secretary, MLG&L
11 DEC 67

This early phase was characterised by a low level of interest by Gaborone in local government, and a willingness to let expatriates in the Ministry keep on with their preoccupation with procedural correctness.¹ Developmental activity was hardly uppermost in anyone's minds during this period, which was dominated, in the words of one senior civil servant, by "colonial snobbishness" vis-à-vis local government.

TRANSITIONAL PERIOD: GROWING DISSATISFACTION

Administrative aspects

After the local government system had been operating for something like two years, a number of factors combined to disturb the sluggish pace of the councils. In the first place an attempt to improve the administrative competence of the councils was made by bringing in a sizeable contingent of expatriate volunteers (mainly Peace Corps, but later also CUSO [Canadian] and British volunteers) to the districts. The first wave were appointed as Council Advisers and took up their posts late in 1968. Most of them were young law or public administration graduates and their first task was to try to improve the procedures of the Councils. But soon they were having a major impact on the sort of activities Councils were undertaking.² In particular they became more and more concerned with development matters.

This new look was completely in line with the new stress on development which was becoming increasingly evident in the Ministry and the Government generally. Councils who did not already have one were

1 The expatriates generally preferred to stick to "purely administrative" matters, leaving "political" matters to the Batswana (Minister and Permanent Secretary).

2 For instance the Central District Council Adviser was largely instrumental in persuading the Council to use its (fairly substantial) reserves in order to undertake various projects - much to the Treasurer's dismay (see above, pp. 172, 184).

encouraged to form a development committee¹ and in general there was a growing recognition in the corridors of power that the District Councils were of direct relevance to the vast bulk of the population. It was also becoming plain that the capacity of the Department of Community Development to develop rural Botswana was strictly limited.² Another factor of major importance from 1968 onwards was the influence of the new Ministry of Development Planning (which became the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning in 1970/71).³ Indeed one of the first tasks undertaken by the newly appointed volunteers (and/or the District Commissioners) was the preparation of the first district development plans; these were subsequently passed (often with no significant amendments) by the District Councils. It should perhaps be stressed that the by now well-known bonanza in central Government revenues was still some distance in the future at this juncture.⁴

From the point of view of the Councils, too, there was a considerable degree of frustration with attempts to communicate with central Government Ministries and Departments (other than the "parent" Ministry).⁵ The main complaints centred on the slowness of communications; the reluctance of departments to divulge information; and above all the difficulty of getting action on the implementation of such things as borehole drilling or road improvements.

1 Recorded in the speech of Director of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, to the Second National Conference of District Development Committees, Gaborone, 6 DEC 73.

2 See P. G. L. Wass, "Community Development in Botswana" (1972), S. J. Tennent, Report on Community Development Department (1974), and the Annual Report of the Community Development Department 1969/70.

3 See H. Dahl, "The Creation of New Ministries: Ministries and Selected Government Department, Public Corporations, Boards, Museums etc, 1966/67", in Cohen & Parson (Eds.) Politics and Society in Botswana (1976) pp. 179-181.

4 See Q. Hermans, "A Review of Botswana's Financial History, 1900-1973", Botswana Notes and Records, VI (1974)

5 See above, pp. 129; 184-185; and 236

Last but not least on the list of administrative problems was the question of the District Administration: as Sillery put it, "Somewhere in the middle of the maze lurks the figure of the District Commissioner".¹ It was evident that this position had either to wither away or be given a new role. In favour of the former solution it was argued that it was a colonial relic; against this had to be set the undoubted fact that every Motswana was familiar with the institution of Molaodi, whereas the Council and its officials and members were as yet less known.²

All the above considerations led the Government to establish, at the end of 1969, a Local Government Study Group under the Chairmanship of Professor W. Tordoff with the following terms of reference:

To examine the structural relationships between the various agencies responsible for provision of services and of development at the district and village levels (the agencies include Central Government Ministries and Departments, District Administration, Traditional Authorities and Local Councils); to indicate areas where changes in relationships or allocation of responsibilities could improve functional efficiency and local participation in governmental processes; to consider and comment on the role of non-governmental organisations in modernising social attitudes and mobilising people for development.³

The "Tordoff" reforms were to alter the shape of rural administration, as will be seen below.

The Political Dimension

Before going on to look at the administrative reforms consequent on the work of the Tordoff committee, it is necessary to look at the political developments which were proceeding in parallel and came to a head in the crisis of 1969.

1 Sillery, op. cit., p. 183

2 There is no real Setswana term for "Council": the loan-word "Khansele" is used.

3 Tordoff, Pilane & Sarpong, Report of the Local Government Study Group (1970), p. 1

It had been on the cards for some time that the powers of the chiefs would be further eroded¹ - indeed this was the principal attraction of the institution of District Councils for many ministers. One change was easily made, viz. the removal of the (Paramount) Chiefs as ex officio Council Chairmen of the relevant Councils, and this was duly done in November 1969.² The Chiefs remained members of the respective Councils and as such were eligible for election to the Chair but in some cases - notably the North West District Council and the Kgatleng District Council³ - suffered the humiliation of electoral defeat at the hands of their "subjects".

More difficult, because more basic, was the removal of the power to allocate land from the Chiefs. The popular reaction to the Tribal Land Act 1968⁴ was such that, even with an amending Act in 1969,⁵ it was not until 1970⁶ that the Government was able to reform the system. It is in part indicative of the Government's lack of faith in the District Councils that the function of land allocation was given to a new body in each communal land tenure area, the Land Board, rather than being transferred to the Councils to administer by a committee. Instead the Land Boards had a tripartite constitution, being composed of representatives of the Traditional Administration (including the Chief) and the Council, plus ministerial nominees. Moreover the role of the lower ranks of the aristocracy was reduced to one of endorsing applications and this

1 As the chiefs were well aware. See Proctor, op. cit., passim.

2 See Appendix "A"

3 See Wiseman, op. cit., p. 279

4 Act No. 54 of 1968

5 Tribal Land (Amendment) Act 1969 (No. 48 of 1969)

6 See W. Tordoff, "Local Administration in Botswana, Part. I," Journal of Administration Overseas, XII, 4 (OCT 73), p. 180

inevitably led to the necessity of creating Subordinate Land Boards in the larger districts.

1969 was a year of crisis for the BDP Government. It was widely recognised that the party stood to lose support in the General Election¹ due by early 1970. In particular the towns of Gaborone and Lobatse were expected to fall to the new radical BNF, while the BIP looked capable of taking three seats in the North West. Then the decision of Botswana's Senior Chief, Bathoen II, not only to enter the electoral lists but to team up with the National Front, created an unpredictable situation. In addition to the Parliamentary election the Local Government elections, now synchronised with it,² opened up the prospect of Opposition gains in many Councils wards where the Democratic Party had been unopposed in 1966. It was largely this uncertainty that prompted President Khama to call the two sets of elections early, in October 1969. Moreover, what now looks like a minor curiosity of the 1969 election campaign, namely the "Kalanga Coup" scare,³ led to the sudden cancellation of the plan to send the Kalanga-speaking Richard Mannathoko to London as High Commissioner; instead he found himself Permanent Secretary of Local Government & Lands.

The scene was then set for the crisis of conscience of the Democratic Party government (returned to power with a reduced majority in 1969). Since the BPP had increased its representation on the North East District Council (Mannathoko's home district), the Government's power of nomination was no longer sufficient to give the BDP control.

1 For the election (of 1969) see W. J. A. Macartney, "Botswana Goes to the Polls," Africa Report, XIV, 8 (DEC 69).

2 See above, pp. 26-27; and BDN, 8 MAY 69

3 See above, p. 26

The result, a "decision which falls short of the ideals we have set ourselves to achieve local democracy," was taken and announced somewhat defensively by Minister Kgabo.¹ The justification he adduced was the need for "planned development".²

THE NEW LOOK

Having ensured that all Councils were under the control of BDP Councillors ostensibly dedicated to development, the Government proceeded to set up new machinery for district planning in which the Councils' role was far from clear. There was a widespread assumption that the purpose of the new District Development Committees (DDCs) was to strengthen the position of the Central Government (acting through the District Commissioner as Chairman) in each District at the expense of the elected Councils. This suspicion was so strong that it took the Acting DC's deliberative and casting votes to defeat a motion amounting to "no confidence" in the new system moved at the inaugural meeting of the Southern District Development Committee by the District Council Chairman.³

The impact of DDCs is analysed below, but there are a number of other developments which added up to the "new look" in local government. For the Councils an even more important innovation was the introduction of the Unified Local Government Service (ULGS), foreshadowed in the (M. J.) Pilane Report of 1972.⁴ The effects of the ULGS were twofold.

1 See Appendix "A"; also Hansard, 30, p. 377 ff. (27 NOV 69)

2 Appendix "A"

3 Personal observation; the vote of 5-4 against the motion is recorded in Southern DDC Minutes, 26 JUL 71.

4 Report of the Commission on the Salaries and Conditions of Service of Local Government Employees (1972), discussed in Tordoff, "Local Administration in Botswana, Part I", op. cit., pp. 177-178

In the first place control over the higher levels of staff (appointments, promotions etc) was removed from the Councils' Staff Committees (or equivalent), which became almost redundant. Secondly, and as a consequence of this, the senior staff were liable to transfer at short notice - as was notoriously the case with District Administration staff - to other districts. While this was ostensibly aimed at providing the now better-salaried local government officer with a more attractive career structure, it was also quite clearly a heavy blow against the particularism which was seen as an inevitable concomitant of the old system, whereby most staff belonged to their home district (and many in fact were inherited from the pre-Independence Tribal Administration). From the perspective of the internal politics of the Councils, the move however strengthened the power of Councillors vis-à-vis powerful, entrenched Council Secretaries, described above.¹ At the same time however the most powerful spokesman for many Councils² vis-à-vis Gaborone was liable to lose his power base at the stroke of a pen wielded in Gaborone. It is little wonder that some Councils protested.³

A movement in the other direction however - i.e. strengthening the position of Councils - took place with the decision to transfer Community Development field staff⁴ to the District Councils, although they retained a separate status in not being covered by the ULGS,⁵

This movement of Community Development staff was one of the recommendations of the study of Chambers and Feldman⁶ which reported

1 See pp. 106-107, 154-157 and 216-219

2 See p. 155 above

3 See p. 237 above

4 The Department was the subject of a searching internal inquiry by Tennent (op. cit.)

5 It was suggested that they be incorporated in the ULGS at a seminar for District Council Secretaries, Gaborone, 26 JUN 74.

6 Chambers & Feldman, Report on Rural Development (1973)

in 1972. One of the most interesting aspects of this study is the timing: the ink was barely dry on the first DDC minutes when the terms of reference of the Chambers and Feldman study were being drafted.

They included the following:-

. . . to review [the] Government's policies, priorities, and programmes for rural development, and the institutional and administrative arrangements for their implementation at both central government, district and village levels. . . . to study and make recommendations on the following matters:

.
the need to define the relationship between and the respective roles of the ruling party at the district and village levels on the one hand and the officials of Central and Local Government on the other in the mobilisation of the people to achieve rural development, bearing in mind that Botswana is a multi-party democracy;

the need to promote [within] the democratic framework the more effective involvement of non-governmental organisations including Political Parties and to determine their role in the implementation of rural development policies and programmes and the interpretation of such policies and programmes to the people in the rural areas. . . .¹

In the event Chambers and Feldman found three months too short a time to deal with all the matters referred to in the very lengthy terms of reference and concentrated on agricultural questions, notably conservation and livestock; thus the touchy question of fencing communal land became a respectable one for public discussion.² As regards the DDC system they were happy to endorse it and recommended strengthening the DDCs with staff and other resources.

It is noteworthy however that the question of the role of political parties was raised in the above-mentioned terms of reference, as it had been discussed by the Tordoff Study Group, which is probably why the report of the latter was never released for public consumption.³ One

1 Ibid., pp. (i)-(ii)

2 Reversing previous Government policy; see above, p. 162.

3 It was however probably read with greater urgency than any comparable publication by its recipients, since its dispatch was followed within 24 hours by a directive to return it unread to Gaborone as it had been dispatched (to District Commissioners and others) in error, i.e. without proper clearance.

detects a certain wistfulness in some quarters (political and administrative) in the capital for a TANU-style, mobilising BDP;¹ but this is countered by the liberal-democrats within the Cabinet and the bureaucracy who prefer the present constitutional framework to a leap in the dark.

PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION AT THE CENTRE

Towards the end of the period studied there occurred a number of changes at the centre which resulted indirectly from the creation of a district planning system but also reflected two other factors. The first of those was the growing influence of the "super-ministry", Finance and Development Planning, which possessed three advantages in particular. The traditional Whitehall-style Treasury function had been exercised by the Ministry of Finance and its control was retained by the new ministry. This was enhanced by the energetic and imaginative civil servants (many of them expatriates, although the Permanent Secretary took out Botswana citizenship), who were able to sell the idea of planning (geared to attracting overseas aid of all kinds). Last but by no means least of the Ministry's advantages has been the political and administrative ability of Dr. Quett Masire, the Republic's Vice-President, who has headed the Ministry since its inception. Masire moreover enjoys the complete confidence of the President who, increasingly preoccupied with foreign affairs from 1969 onwards, has been happy to leave the running in many major internal questions to the Vice-President.

Next to Finance & Development Planning in terms of innovative ideas and an ability to put across arguments for an emphasis on rural development²

1 See below, p. 428

2 For earlier criticism of the Government's failure to translate its rhetoric into practice see J. D. Holm, "Rural Development in Botswana: three basic political trends," Rural Africana, Fall 1972

came one or two key civil servants in the Ministry of Local Government & Lands, all of whom had the additional advantage of practical experience in the Districts. In the Ministry moreover the rise of K. P. Morake - who first as Assistant Minister after the 1969 General Election handled the developmental aspects of local administration (especially the DDCs) - to be Minister of Local Government & Lands in 1973 gave a new complexion to the Ministry. Morake, like the Vice-President, had a long record of activity in organising the ruling party and had a wider, more nation-wide outlook than his predecessor. His shrewdness proved a vital asset in the Ministry's new bid for influence. Simultaneously with Morake's promotion to Minister came a change of Permanent Secretary. The new appointee, Ben Makabole, was a very different figure from his predecessor. A young graduate who had risen rapidly in the Civil Service, he presented a lower profile, and appeared more concerned with strictly administrative matters, preferring to delegate more responsibility to his senior assistants.

The emphasis of the Ministry of Local Government & Lands changed from a preoccupation with cajoling District Councils into following correct procedures to a readiness to get involved in disputes with other Ministries, who now became the recipient of caustic correspondence such as this: "Your uninvited comments on the way this Ministry chooses to deal with its own portfolio responsibilities are surprising"¹ (the question at issue was slowness in equipping of boreholes).

The new-found assertiveness of Local Government & Lands can be traced to the twin foundations of its alliance with the senior Ministry of Finance & Development Planning and the Government's growing commitment

1 Permanent Secretary, MIG&L, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Water Affairs, 19 JAN 72

to giving rural development explicit priority - a process which was given its first formal statement in the Government's first "White Paper", Government Paper No. 1¹ in 1972, and restated in a further Government Paper in 1973² as well as being reflected in successive National Development Plans. These Government Papers were widely distributed and exerted a strong influence on the bureaucracy at all levels.

As an example of the tie-up between the two Ministries, the old inter-ministerial committee for vetting rural development projects, which had fallen into disuse (with the role being taken over effectively by a senior civil servant in Local Government & Lands), was changed into a four-man committee consisting of two representatives from each of what one might call the two rural planning ministries.

A notable feature of central administration became the dichotomy between the "planning" and the "implementing" ministries. One potent form by which the former put pressure on the latter was the Annual Conference of District Development Committees, which came to meet for several days. In some respects it was like the Parliamentary debate on the budget, except that the criticism was better informed, and those criticised could not shelter behind either Parliamentary rules or the doctrine of ministerial responsibility. Appendix F illustrates the follow-up requests made of the Government machine by the 1973 conference. The influence of the conference was reflected also in various District Council meetings, where a line adopted at the conference - e.g. on licensing policy or on Food-for-Work - was put forward by the Council Secretary.³

1 Rural Development in Botswana: Government Paper No. 1 (1972)

2 National Policy for Rural Development: Government Paper No. 2 of 1973

3 See above, p. 164

Complementing such annual conferences were institutions set up in accordance with Government Paper No. 1 - the Rural Development Council and the National Extension Education Co-ordinating Committee, as well as the National Resources Technical Committee. A powerful additional fillip was given by the creation of a small but high-powered Rural Development Unit operating under Finance & Development Planning, which saw its role as an "oilcan", helping to remove bottlenecks and generate ideas. These it proceeded to do with energy and scored a notable success in getting the Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP) launched at the beginning of 1974. In doing this it, and the Ministry of Local Government & Lands, were able to argue that the substantial extra revenue¹ which had accrued to the Government ought to be applied to a highly visible programme of rural development in election year 1974. The "rural planning" pressure group thus hoped to make a lasting improvement in District Councils' capacity for development administration, even if the manner of the conduct of the ARDP was unpopular with those in the Districts to whom it came as a surprise.

What has just been referred to as the rural planning group was just one manifestation of a notable phenomenon in Botswana: the expatriate "ideas men", who presented with enthusiasm papers at conferences and seminars organised notably by the Botswana Society (President - Dr. Masire). The Society also published a journal, Botswana Notes & Records, edited by a husband and wife team one of whom was a senior Government economist, which provided a number of imaginative contributions to a series of debates on the future shape of Botswana's economy and ecology.² The

1 See Hermans, op. cit.

2 See particularly the special edition arising from the Conference on Sustained Production from Semi-Arid Areas with particular reference to Botswana, OCT 71.

equivalent people in the Districts were the large number of volunteers, particularly Canadian and American, who provided the bulk of the cadre of District Officers (Development), i.e. District Development Committee Secretaries. At one stage there were over 60 such graduate volunteers to only four Batswana graduates in this area.¹ The precise role of the DDCs is a subject of the last section of this chapter.

CONTINUING PROBLEMS

Lest the impression may have been given that rural development and planning was an unrelieved success story, it must be stressed that the perspective from the Districts was not always the same as that of Gaborone. One District Commissioner referred to the planners in the capital as "oversophisticated and underage" and it was a common comment that a very large part of the civil service was not taking the structure seriously.

In this connexion there were frequent complaints that the time given to District Development Committees and District Councils for the consideration of documents like the Chambers & Feldman Report, or the preparation of District development plans, was ludicrously short, and inevitably meant inadequate discussion by the elected representatives of the people. The typical pattern was a punishing schedule of drafting by one or two officials, often expatriate, with little scope for amendment owing to the time constraints; meanwhile the central Ministries had already taken decisions which were of great importance for the Districts.

The other big complaint concerned the reluctance of central government departments to give information. In one instance the Geological Survey Department refused to answer a question from the DDC Secretary² on the

1 As of March 1974

2 In the Southern District

location of its drilling rigs; his opposite number in another District¹ was unable to find out the location of boreholes. For their part some of the Ministries under fire hit back, with comments such as these:

There has existed for some time considerable apprehension about the status of Rural Electricity Projects, compounded by [the] Government's apparent inability to devise a coherent, national policy on the subject.

As a result costly mistakes have been made,² for example at Palapye, Mahalapye and Serowe. . . .

Frank acknowledgement of the central government's shortcomings with respect to district level planning was made in a speech by the new Assistant Minister of Local Government & Lands in 1976 which included this passage:

We acknowledge that our Ministry, and others, failed to provide the Districts with the resources and encouragement necessary in the last Plan period. We failed to monitor our own response to your needs. We shall try and do better next time.³

It was however above all to the District Development Committees that the Government looked for solutions to the problems of communication and co-ordination of development.

THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

Any assessment of the impact of District Development Committees cannot be other than tentative at this stage, given that the institution came in towards the end of the period studied. Moreover the continued existence of the new structure was by no means guaranteed; witness the attempts made after four years of its existence to have DDCs abolished.⁴ Nevertheless DDCs provided both a useful source of information on the political ecology

1 The Central District

2 Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works & Communications, to Ngwaketse District Council Secretary, 7 AUG 70.

3 Hon. L. M. Seretse, MP, "Planning with the People: a new direction for District Planning in Botswana," opening address of the National Conference of District Development Committees, 1 NOV 76, p. 9.

4 See below, p. 368

of each District and insights into the workings of the administrative machine at District level; the fact that they met more frequently than the District Councils,¹ and that English was the language of meetings, made the researcher's task easier.

Structure and practice

First a brief outline of DDC structure and practice is necessary.² Each DDC was chaired by the District Commissioner and had the District Officer (Development) as Secretary. All included the District Council Chairman and Secretary and a number of field officers of central government departments. The number of these varied, as did the number of co-opted members. Such a distinction is in any case academic since there was no differentiation in practice between the categories of full and co-opted members. What is noteworthy is the absence of elected politicians,³ unless it should happen that the Council Chairman was an elected rather than a nominated councillor - in two⁴ of the three Councils in the relevant period this was not the case. (Indeed, as one DDC Secretary put it, the DDC should be heavily weighted towards bureaucrats "as it is strictly a device to facilitate better communication between bureaucrats. It should in no way conflict with the District Council or any other legislative body by having on it persons who purport to represent the people.")

Actual attendance at DDC meetings varied tremendously.⁵ Apart from the core members, others tended to regard it either as a chore,

1 On average every 4-6 weeks, compared with four annual statutory (ordinary) meetings of the Councils.

2 For a useful summary of the initial period of the new structure see Tordoff, "Local Administration in Botswana - I" (op. cit.)

3 And was the subject of a comment in Chambers & Feldman (op. cit.), who recommended more involvement of MPs, on an invited basis, provided they did not "overwhelm the proceedings with speeches" (p. 185).

4 Central and Southern District Councils. The North East District Council chairman for 1972 was an elected (BDP) Councillor.

5 See Appendix E (for the North East DDC); and, for Ghanzi DDC, BDN, 18 FEB 75.

to be avoided whenever possible, or as a welcome break in their routine and/or a useful forum in which to fly personal kites.

Inevitably the contribution of the latter category, particularly those who, as good committee men, took the trouble to "do their homework," was much more marked in the realm of ideas, plans and projects. The unwritten constitution of DDCs favoured consensualism - based not on the kgotla norms, since most members were expatriates, so much as the Pan-African principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Particularly in the Central DDC the tendency was to accept the expertise of the relevant officer and to support his schemes as part of the "Serowe versus Gaborone" syndrome; undoubtedly the sheer size of the Central District made for less familiarity with other members' portfolios. In the North East DDC, by contrast, it was much more common for departmental positions to be challenged and indeed the DDC was seen by one Chairman as a useful device for embarrassing defaulting departments. In this connexion the absence of certain members was not infrequently criticised.¹ However a major limitation on the ability of the DDC to exert pressure on members (usually officers of the "implementing" Ministries) was the number of expatriates on three-year contracts, whose co-operativeness decreased with the imminence of their departure.

DDC leadership

An a priori assumption might be that the rapid turnover of civil servant members of the DDCs would strengthen the position of the more permanent members, notably the representatives of the Council and the traditional administration. The time the system was in operation was

1 For three separate instances in one meeting see NEDDC Minutes, 13-14 DEC 72,

far too short to be able to gauge this, and in any case it was counter-balanced by the advantage of those members - notably the District Administrative staff - who brought with them previous experience of another DDC.

From observation of actual meetings it was clear that the key members were the District Commissioner as Chairman, the DO(D) as Secretary, the Council Secretary, the Council Chairman, and often one or two other assiduous individuals. To that extent the system showed signs of developing into a closely co-ordinated oligarchy of senior administrators - if, and only if, those concerned shared similar views on both substance and procedure. Much of the variation between the three DDCs studied was due to the presence or absence of such a relationship.

In the North East, the Council Secretary¹ was generally jealous of his Council's position, and tended to comment adversely on any procedural detail where he detected shortcomings - e.g. whether it was the job of the Secretary or the Chairman to do something, or whether the minutes had been sent out promptly.² The net effect of such a prickly attitude was to induce the DO(D) to devote an inordinate amount of effort to ensuring that the Council Secretary was fully briefed and consulted about absolutely everything, and to attribute the authorship of documents to the latter wherever possible.³ With the later appointment of a District Council Development Officer the relationship was improved as he was able to liaise between his superior and the DO(D)/District Commissioner.

1 See above pp. 216-219

2 NEDDC Minutes, 25 JUN 73

3 E.g. "Development in the North East District for 1973/78 - a report by Secretary, North East District Council with the assistance of the District Officer (Development)."

In the Central District, by contrast, a relaxed attitude prevailed, with both sides enjoying a relationship of mutual trust, so that the DDC Secretary and Council Development Officer in particular worked together in trying to extract the maximum of concessions from the Ministry of Local Government & Lands.

In the Southern District the early hostility expressed by the Council Chairman towards the DDC¹ gradually gave way to a relationship characterised by close co-operation. In this development the key influence was the apparent acceptance by all concerned that they had a common interest in Kanye in pressing demands on or making complaints to the centre.

Case Studies

A classic instance was the inept handling of the Kanye Youth Training Centre. At a DDC meeting much concern was expressed, as the following extracts show:

Kanye Youth Training Centre

(a) The Chairman summarised for the Committee the contents of a letter copied to his office as well as to the Director of Community Development and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, from the Ministry of Local Government and Lands to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning in which . . . points were made with respect to the closing of the KYTC by the 1st March, 1973.

.....
(b) The Community Development Officer expressed surprise and disbelief at the Chairman's report, stating that this was the first time he had been notified of such matters, as neither the Director of Community Development nor the KYTC coordinator had informed him of such matters. He also questioned whether the KYTC coordinator himself knew of this turn of events.

(c) The Council Secretary expressed his belief that there had been altogether too much confidentiality in the Ministerial decision-making with respect to the future of the KYTC.

(d) The Vice-Chairman of the Southern District Council stated that, given present lack of information, rumours as to the

1 See above, p. 350

future of KYTC were running riot in Kanye and that young people were already preparing applications for entrance into KYTC courses for next year.

(e) The Committee urged the Chairman to arrange at the earliest possible date a meeting between the Director of Community Development and the proposed KYTC Board of Trustees in order that the Director could brief them [on] the present status and planned future of the KYTC, and in order that the Director could hear the views of the proposed Board on these matters.¹

Further proof of the importance of the relationship between Council and DDC is provided by the fate of two contrasting projects, the Western Ngwaketse Development Programme² in the Southern District and the Matsiloje Group Cattle Ranch³ in the North East.⁴ Both involved potentially controversial proposals: in the former the use of fencing - hitherto anathema in communal grazing areas - and in the latter the idea of a village co-operative to run a ranch. The Southern District scheme was approved on behalf of the Council by one of its committees; this procedure required the collaboration of the Council Secretary. By contrast the North East District Council, asked by the Ministry responsible to arrange for consultation with the local people, chose to call a district-wide meeting, which had the effect of worrying the Matsiloje villagers that "their" land (it was actually State Land) was to be opened up to residents of other parts of the District; the scheme virtually foundered on the rock of this distrust. The DDC secretaries in each case regarded the Council Secretary as the key figure in arranging the very different outcome to the two projects.

There was however a further and ultimately more important dimension to these questions: the central Government. Support at ministerial

1 SDDC Minutes, 19 DEC 72 (emphasis in the original).

2 Project No SDDC 1

3 Initially Project A2 in the NED Development Plan 1973/78 (Part II)

4 On both projects see Hansard, 49, pp. 131-132 (15 MAR 74)

level for the Western Ngwaketse Scheme was unreserved; the same was not true of the Matsiloje scheme, to which one influential civil servant who belonged to the North East District was strongly opposed. The importance of Governmental attitudes was further demonstrated by the question of decentralisation in the Central District.¹ Following the Tordoff and Chambers & Feldman recommendations,² the Central DDC discussed the question and came up with a scheme of administrative decentralisation.³ In the event however not much came of the plan,⁴ which conflicted with the BDP's interest in preserving the unwieldy Central District as an entity.

The impact of the DDCs

Summarising the impact of the DDCs as an institution one can conclude, firstly, that it succeeded in making a great deal of information available amongst the members. Secondly, the most important individual was the District Officer (Development), who was able to use the prevalent "consensualism" to inject many ideas into the system and have them endorsed. Thirdly it helped create a distinct team spirit amongst administrators in the district headquarters. This team, fourthly, came to act as a pressure group on behalf of the district vis-à-vis the central Government⁵ and also vis-à-vis the field staff of "implementing" departments.

1 See pp. 190-192 above

2 The Tordoff Report (op. cit.), p. 21 and Appendix III; Chambers & Feldman, op. cit., pp. 217-219

3 Central DDC Minutes 27 FEB 73, 12 JUN 73

4 Further discussion of which was halted by the Government (ibid., 30 JUL 73).

5 A revealing remark was made by one DO(D) who said, "I have the impression that there were a number of Gaborone bureaucrats who never went out into the districts and felt, in recognition of that, that they should listen to the DDC as their token gesture towards involving the districts in decision-making. Most bureaucrats in Gaborone seemed to relate better to the DDC than a political body such as the Council."

It is however the relationship between the DDC and the District Council that both occasioned most speculation during the period of the establishment of the novel institution and is most relevant to this study.

Many participants in and observers of this new system remained sceptical about the motives behind its introduction, seeing it as part of the same process as the reduction of the powers of the Chiefs, the "packing" of Councils with the Government's men, the creation of land boards and the implementation of the Unified Local Government Service. Such fears were not allayed by the remarks made by personnel of the Ministry of Local Government & Lands to the effect that

in the case of a party clash between council and Government, an opposition party would [if proposals for the transfer of DDC functions to Councils were accepted] have control over a District's development and the workings of its Ministerial representatives. This could be potentially disruptive in practice.¹

The existence of friction as late as 1976 was testified to by the Assistant Minister of Local Government & Lands,² in the following words:

It is my firm belief that local authorities should be made free to make their own plans within the framework of the National Plan, and that they should be encouraged to be free to press for the acceptance of their plans as part of the National Plans. In this respect we have District Development Committees, where ideas can be exchanged at local level.

I am aware however that the role of these committees has become a controversial issue to local authorities, but it is my considered view that the sincerity of [the] Government in establishing these committees to assist local authorities in the planning process cannot be overemphasised. Perhaps it could be that the idiosyncracies of some individuals in these committees are responsible for the conflict and the apparent rivalry between local authorities and themselves. There is no doubt in my mind however that with the passage of time some

1 Resolutions and Minutes of the National Conference of District Development Committees . . . , 28-30 JUL 75.

2 And former Central District Council Secretary.

local authorities are responding to the dynamics of change and have a feeling that some of the controls from above on matters of a local nature, which they are competent to handle, are bureaucratic and tend to relegate them to a nonsensical role. Whilst I do not wish to sound unsympathetic to the aspirations of some local authorities for some autonomy, I would like to say that complete autonomy at this stage of our development particularly in the fact of shortage of manpower, could not be casually granted to local authorities, but on the other hand complete subordination to Central Government would negate the objectives of our local Government system. Neither side should be in opposition to the other: what should really be at issue is the amount of free choice which the senior partner should allow the junior partner. There is however nothing derogatory to local authorities in accepting that Central Government must have some control, the relaxation of which can only come about when there is a visible improvement in the staffing position of local authorities. It is therefore incumbent upon me to appeal to everyone of you at this conference to share your experiences and skills with local authorities in an atmosphere of calm and mutual respect without engaging in confrontation which could only taint the gigantic efforts we have so far made within a short space of time.¹

Nevertheless, despite evidence of an underlying suspicion of the new system, the two sides did perforce establish a working relationship which may best be characterised as a kind of bicameralism. The relationship was however peculiar in that the two bodies, literally and figuratively, operated on different frequencies and spoke different languages. This meant in practice that the DDC tended to acquire something of an "executive committee" function for the district, and, furthermore, that the position of those who were members of both bodies was considerably strengthened. These were the Council Secretary, the Council Chairman, the Chief (in appropriate Councils), the District Commissioner, and the DC's staff including the District Officer (Development). In the many districts where a nominated Councillor was elected Council Chairman this group included no elected representatives of the people

1 L. M. Seretse, MP, "Planning with the People . . ." (op. cit.), pp. 7-8, (emphasis added).

at all, and in no district was the Opposition voice heard in the new system, irrespective of its local electoral strength.

That said, the "bicameral" relationship that evolved was less upsetting to the Councils than they had originally feared. Thus amendments to Council Development Plans were both minor and few in number, and were matched by amendments accepted by the DDC from the Council.¹ Moreover the novel (and initially unwelcome) experience of having its plans scrutinized by the DDC was outweighed by the new-found scope for commenting on those aspects of district-level Government activity which were strictly speaking outwith the Council's terms of reference.

While the planning procedure worked out reasonably satisfactorily, it was often day-to-day DDC activities which were of greater real significance, and here the record was a mixed one. On the one hand examples exist of problems which the Council was happy to pass to the DDC for solution.² On the other hand decisions taken by the central Government to use the DDCs (i.e. the local District Commissioner and the DO[D]) to administer famine relief and to revise priorities for implementation under the ARDP³ crash programme of 1974 revived some of the original doubts. This was one of the factors underlying the resolution in favour of the abolition of DDCs passed in 1975 at meetings of District Council Secretaries and, more remarkably, at the annual national conference of DDCs later that year. It is worth

1 A good example is the North East District Development Plan 1973/78.

2 E.g. water crises in the North East (see above, p. 237)

3 In a beautiful example of "objective" decision making, the original priority list (drawn up painstakingly on the basis of population and distance from amenities) was swiftly replaced by one taking into account the logistics of rapid implementation.

reproducing this extract from the debate:

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE-DISTRICT COUNCIL RELATIONSHIP
PRESENT AND FUTURE

Chairman: B. G. Makobole [Permanent Secretary, Ministry of
Local Government & Lands]

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman drew the Conference's attention to a resolution of the Mahalapye meeting of Council Secretaries earlier in the year, which recommended the abolition of DDCs in favour of Councils. He asked for statement of the rationale for that view.

CONFERENCE ELABORATION

Delegates stated that:-

.
Councils, as political, elected bodies represent democracy at District level and should therefore have the last word in decisions affecting development in the Districts.

The conference resolved that functions of DDCs should be passed over to Councils.

RESPONSES TO THE ARGUMENTS

Several objectives [sic] to the above arguments were voiced mainly by Ministry of Local Government and Lands personnel
. . .¹

This unease expressed about the way the system was developing concerned not so much the absolute powers of Local Government as its relative position vis-à-vis the central Government and, above all, the future course of institutional development. It was feared that, unless the key resource of trained manpower was placed at the disposal of the elected Councils, their potential growth into the main district-level institution would be stunted and that the system would thus become more and more one of district administration, complemented by consultation, rather than the kind of executive role which formed an essential part of the "democratic Local Government" model.

1 Resolutions and Minutes of the National Conference of District Development Committees, 28-30 JUL 75

CHAPTER 9

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

There are a number of reasons for the inclusion of a chapter on MPs. One is the pyramid theory which, at its most simplistic, would suggest some kind of automatic connection between elected bodies at the various levels. Some MPs, according to this theory, will be found to be playing a part in representing the views of the District or Town Council appropriate for their constituency. It has moreover been accepted by the Government, following the Tordoff Report,¹ that MPs ought to be actively involved with district level organisations, i.e. District Councils and District Development Committees, and for that matter (pace Chambers & Feldman) with Village Development Committees.²

A second reason for dealing with MPs in this context is the broker or middleman theory, discussed elsewhere.³ This assumes that the political self-interest of an MP will impel him to cultivate links with Councils. In so doing the MP would act as the Council's advocate with the central Government and relay information to the Council about plans concerning the Council (including legislative proposals) as well as progress on the implementation of relevant decisions.

1 Tordoff, Pilane & Sarpong, Report of the Local Government Study Group (1970), [hereinafter referred to as the Tordoff Report], p. 52

2 Chambers & Feldman, Report on Rural Development (1973), p. 184

3 Especially pp. 3-4 and 289 ff.

As important figures in their respective parties, moreover, MPs have an additional direct bond with councillors in their constituencies: every MP has within his constituency several district councillors belonging to his party. This link was intensified over time with the trend towards recruitment of town and district councillors as parliamentary candidates, with one or two MPs indeed continuing to hold positions in both levels of elected body simultaneously.¹

Over and above these reasons, it was to be expected that MPs, as representatives of the people, would comment upon local government as one of many institutions of interest to politicians. In particular the often elusive differences between the parties (as regards local government and rural development issues) could be expected to be refined in the crucible of debate in the National Assembly.

What is essayed here, then, is not a general analysis of Parliament² but rather an account of the relevant aspects of MPs' activities, with the National Assembly as the starting point. But first it is necessary to set the scene.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SETTING

The gentlemanly and good-humoured ethos of Botswana's National Assembly lends point to its description as "a national on-going 'kgotla meeting'".³ Fierce clashes are rare, as are fundamental disagreements on policy matter, while divisions (votes) are generally avoided.⁴ But

1 In the Second Parliament these included notably the Mayor of Gaborone and MP for Gaborone & Ramotswa; and a Specially Elected (Co-opted) MP who remained Chairman of the Southern District Council.

2 For a comparative study of the Parliament of Botswana up to 1968 see W. J. A. Macartney, "The Parliaments of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland" (1969), The Parliamentarian, L, 2 (APR 69), pp. 92-101. Useful summaries of Parliamentary proceedings on a quarterly basis are to be found in the same journal.

3 Editorial in Kutlwano, XIII, 9 (SEP 74), p. 20

4 Except where required, particularly for Constitutional Amendments (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, Section 90).

of course Parliament, modelled on Westminster,¹ has its own procedural rules, not least the recognition of an official Opposition, which modify the kgotla approach considerably. Moreover, as the years have passed since the first Legislative Assembly² met in 1965, the institution has settled down into a pattern of its own which includes, increasingly, constructive criticism - by which is meant a combination of two elements: an acceptance of BDP rule for the foreseeable future, and an assertion of the right of MPs to reject specific measures or practices on which Members feel they have not been fully consulted. For its part the Government has been prepared to accept occasional reverses, and moreover has refrained from changing the rules to handicap the Opposition - as happened in nearby Swaziland after the first post-independence election.³

Thus the loss of four seats by the ruling BDP in 1969, and the consequent appearance of two new Parliamentary opposition parties, was absorbed without much fuss; indeed the spectacle of divisions of opinion on the Opposition benches⁴ caused a fair degree of satisfaction to Democratic Party MPs. These disagreements however cannot in general be related to basic policy differences so much as to tactical considerations, such as whether or not to support a particular motion or Bill.

Differences between the two sides of the house did however exist. Apart from matters relevant to local government and rural development (discussed below), these can be summarised under the headings of

1 See Standing Orders of the National Assembly (several editions)

2 As the Assembly was termed under the Internal Self-Government Constitution of 1965. The same body continued in being but was renamed the National Assembly at Independence.

3 See "Swaziland" [Parliamentary Report], The Parliamentarian, LIII, 4 (OCT 72), p. 353

4 Particularly between the old-established BPP and their new rivals the BNF.

general opposition, external relations, race relations and localisation (i.e. the employment of Batswana, principally in the civil service, in place of expatriates). All of these items reflect the Pan-Africanist and anti-colonial heritage of the opposition parties. What is notable is the extent to which either the Government or leading BDP backbenchers have stolen the Opposition's clothes on all of these issues, while ill-advised actions or remarks by Opposition MPs¹ have further dented their credibility. The Opposition parties have taken seriously their duty to oppose, epitomised by a series of motions of no confidence in various ministries tabled by the Leader of the BPP. But the criticisms have been increasingly based on the Government's performance rather than disagreements over policy. Even in procedural terms the Opposition has resorted less and less frequently to tabling amendments to Government Bills, thereby passing up the opportunity of further debate but at the price of disclosing its alternatives. It has looked as if each opposition party accepted its position as being permanently on the left of the Speaker's chair.

It is not surprising then to note the steady growth in the self-assertiveness of BDP backbenchers, who could sometimes use the fear of a link-up between private Members on both sides in order to extract concessions in the Domkrag caucus.² Three instances can be cited to chart the growing militancy of the Democratic Party backbenchers in the Second Parliament (i.e. after the 1969 Election). The first was an amendment tabled by the BDP MP for Gaborone & Ramotswa to the Shop

1 Notably ex-Chief Bathoefi's visit to Namibia (see BDN 14 SEP 71) and a speech by the BPP Member for Mochudi expressing reservations about the President's condemnation of the Smith régime in Rhodesia (see Hansard 30, p. 152 [24 NOV 69]).

2 The official term for the Parliamentary Party meeting.

Hours (Amendment) Bill, 1970. It was pressed to a division and only just defeated with the help of four Opposition Members; all parties (except the one-man BIP!) and the Cabinet were split on this vote.¹ The next backbench revolt occurred over the question of Certificates of Urgency² which many MPs felt were being abused by the Government for the convenience of an arrogant bureaucracy at the expense of the Parliamentarians.³ Sharp criticism led to an undertaking, honoured by and large, to reduce the practice drastically. The climax came with the defeat of the Government on the Second Reading of the Botswana Housing Corporation (Amendment) (no. 2) Bill; the Bill concerned authorisation for a loan to the Corporation but was used as the occasion for a general censure of the Government's urban housing policies.⁴ This revolt and a similar demonstration which followed it immediately afterwards⁵ established the independence of Parliament, since no measures were taken against the backbenchers involved.

As a corollary to this militancy, MPs on both sides complained at the failure of Ministries to reply to letters⁶ and drew the obvious lesson, viz. that the formal machinery of Parliament was by far the most effective way to get action.⁷ This does not mean that MPs

1 Hansard 33, p. 145 (7 JUL 70)

2 A device used to shorten considerably the time available for MPs to scrutinise Bills before their debate in the Assembly.

3 Hansard, 40, p. 14 (6 MAR 72)

4 See "Botswana" [Parliamentary Report], The Parliamentarian, LIV, 2 (APR 73) p. 104.

5 Ibid.

6 E.g. The BPP Leader on 16 MAR 71 (Hansard, 36, p. 170), and the BDP MP for Kanye North on 29 MAR 68 (Hansard, 24, p. 196).

7 Parliamentary questions were accorded the same sort of priority in the Government Mall, Gaborone, as in Whitehall, and were taken equally seriously by Ministers. Supplementary questions were taken up more by the Opposition than by BDP backbenchers.

restricted themselves to Parliamentary channels for contacting the departments of state. There is evidence that MPs, when in Gaborone, habitually dropped in on the Minister of Local Government & Lands, combining the traditional courtesy call with informal queries about constituency matters. During meetings of the National Assembly, moreover, MPs naturally lobbied ministers in the bar/cafeteria. But there was felt to be a barrier between MPs and civil servants, with whom contact was more difficult in practice; hence the recourse to formal procedures.

MPs AS CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Of the various procedures available to Members to raise constituency matters, Question Time provides the most obvious, and the most frequently used, method. By examining the questions asked¹ it is possible to see, firstly, how active MPs were in tabling questions and, secondly, the extent to which they used Question Time to raise constituency matters. Such a detailed examination also permits one to see behind the aggregate data of party activity. It should be emphasised in this connection that what counts is not the absolute so much as the relative figures.²

Thus the fact that in the Second Parliament of Botswana (which is the more interesting, since all four parties were represented in it) the Opposition MPs asked more questions than their BDP opposite numbers (the ratio being 62:57) is found to conceal marked differences between the "old" and "new" opposition parties. Table 9.1 gives the details.

1 Most questions tabled were for oral answer. The data which follows does not include questions for written answer, mainly because Hansard provides an unreliable record of the latter.

2 Especially since there were problems with the production of Hansards, largely due to deficiencies in the recording equipment; hence the data is incomplete for some sessions.

TABLE 9.1

Parliamentary Questions by Party per Head
National Assembly: Second Parliament (1969-1974)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>General</u>
Overall	59	28	30
Government BDP	57	35	22
Opposition combined	62	15	47
Opposition BIP	185	51	134
BNF	70	11	58
BPP	14	7	7

- Notes: 1. Figures rounded to nearest whole number (in Tables 9.1 - 9.3)
2. Data in Tables 9.1 - 9.5 inclusive refers to full-time private Members only, i.e. excluding those who were Cabinet Ministers for any part of the relevant period, and those who were not Members for the whole Parliament concerned.

The small number of questions asked by the People's Party MPs (a quarter of the number asked by their rivals) may be partly a function of their greater experience (since the number of questions asked by all MPs - BDP and BPP - per day of Sitting declined perceptibly over the four sessions from 1965 to 1968): even in the early days of the pre-independence Legislative Assembly the Opposition asked fewer questions than the Democratic Party (39% of the BDP level), as Table 9.2 illustrates. Indeed the declining BPP share of question time in the First Parliament (see Table 9.3) was reversed, albeit slightly, in the more competitive atmosphere of the four-party Second Parliament.

TABLE 9.2

Parliamentary Questions by Party per Head
Bechuanaland Protectorate: Legislative Assembly: First Session (1965-66)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>General</u>
Overall	21	9	12
BDP	23	10	13
BPP (Opposition)	9	3	7

TABLE 9.3

Parliamentary Questions by Party per Head
Republic of Botswana: First Parliament (1966-69)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>General</u>
Overall	27	10	16
BDP	30	12	18
BPP (Opposition)	6	1	5

The limitations of isolating the party variable can be easily discerned by a further breakdown of the questions asked by individual MPs,¹ given in Table 9.4.

TABLE 9.4

Parliamentary Questions: Activity Level (descending order)
Republic of Botswana: Second Parliament

		<u>Government:BDP</u>	<u>Opposition</u>
<u>Rank</u> <u>Order</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Member (Constituency)</u>	<u>Member (Constituency), Party</u>
1	185		Mpho (Okavango), BIP
2	139		<u>Gaseitsiwe (Kanye S.)</u> , BNF
3	97	Jankie (Ghanzi)	
4	87	Sikunyana (Bobirwa)	
5=	83	Chilume (Nkange)	
5=	83	<u>Mosinyi (Shoshong)</u>	
7	63	Maswikiti (Sebinas & Gweta)	
8	62	<u>Koma (Mahalapye)</u>	
9	60	Nkoane (Kweneng S.)	
[average 59]			
10	58	Moapare (Kgalagadi)	
11	44	<u>Sebeso (Tswapong S.)</u>	
12	43	Monwela (Maun & Chobe)	
13	42		Yane (Kanye N.), BNF
14	37	Seboni (Gaborone & Ramotswa)	
15	36		<u>Nkhwa (Tati W.)</u> , BPP
16	29	Kwerepe (Ngami)	
17	28		<u>Tshane (Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi)</u> , BNF
18	25	Reokwaeng (Kweneng W.)	
19	21	Steinberg (Boteti)	
20	6		<u>Matante (Francistown & Tati E.)</u> , BPP
21	1		Motlhagodi (Mochudi), BPP

Note for Tables 9.4 and 9.5: Names underlined are MPs mentioned in the text as representing the villages studied. Broken underlining indicates MPs otherwise specially mentioned.

¹ Directly elected MPs, that is.

Table 9.4 demonstrates the wide variations among different Members of the same party and in particular the impact of the Leaders of the BIP (Mr. Mpho) and the BNF (Mr. Gaseitsiwe, the former Chief Bathoefi II),¹ who topped the league easily. The BPP Leader (Mr. Matante) by contrast, appears almost at the bottom of the table. It will also be noted that the BDP MPs representing the Mahalapye area of the Central District (Messrs. Koma, Mosinyi and Sebeso) were reasonably active at Question time.²

The level of activity at Question Time does not, of course, of itself indicate the number of constituency matters raised. Table 9.5 brings this out clearly.

TABLE 9.5

Constituency Questions: Descending order of activity
Republic of Botswana: Second Parliament

		<u>Government:BDP</u>	<u>Opposition</u>
<u>Rank</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Member (Constituency)</u>	<u>Member (Constituency), Party</u>
<u>Order</u>			
1	70	Jankie (Ghanzi)	
2=	51	Moapare (Kgalagadi)	
2=	51		Mpho (Okavango), BIP
4=	44	Maswikiti (Sebinas & Gweta)	
4=	44	Nkoane (Kweneng S.)	
4=	44	Sikunyana (Bobirwa)	
7=	40	Chilume (Nkange)	
7=	40	Mosinyi (Shoshong)	
9	34	Koma (Mahalapye)	
10	32	Sebeso (Tswapong S.)	
11	24	Monwela (Maun & Chobe)	
12	22	Reokwaeng (Kweneng W.)	
13	20	Kwerepe (Ngami)	
14	19		Nkhwa (Tati W.), BPP
15=	15	Seboni (Gaborone & Ramotswa)	
15=	15		Yane (Kanye N.), BNF
17	10		Gaseitsiwe (Kanye S.), BNF
18=	9	Steinberg (Boteti)	
18=	9		Tshane (Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi), BNF
20	2		Matante (Francistown & Tati E.), BPP
21	0		Motlagodi (Mochudi), BPP

Note: See note for previous tables

1 Chief Bathoefi was by far the most active questioner in the House of Chiefs.

2 As Deputy Speaker, G. G. Sebeso had adopted a fairly low profile in the first Parliament.

Thus the most active constituency MP is revealed as the MP for Ghanzi - made famous in Kuper's book¹ as the archetypal "new man" - and he is followed by his neighbour, MP for Kgalagadi, one of the most silent Members of the National Assembly. And while Mpho appears next, Gaseitsiwe is well down the list. It is possible to see an echo of the interests of the more remote Central and Southern District councillors in local questions.² But it is most evident that the individual is a highly important factor here, as elsewhere in the polity of Botswana.

This data ties in with the breakdown of questions as between constituency and general (national and international) matters³ in Table 9.1, where it is shown that the BDP backbenchers were interested more in constituency than in general questions. And while this is a post-1969 phenomenon, the relatively greater interest in constituency questions shown by Government as against Opposition backbenchers - which has been noted elsewhere⁴ - has been consistently true from the days of the Protectorate's Legislative Assembly and the First Parliament of the Republic (Tables 9.2 and 9.3). A possible explanation⁵ is that "general" questions are more likely to be critical of government policy than "constituency" ones.

1 A. Kuper, Kalahari Village Politics (1970), especially Chapter 3.

2 See Table 2.14, pp. 79-80

3 General questions as well as raising points about Government Departments ranged over a wide field including allegations of racial discrimination (especially on the notorious Rhodesian Railways), citizenship/refugees and foreign affairs. Typical constituency questions concerned water (boreholes/dams), communications and transport, and the distribution of medical and veterinary supplies.

4 Macartney, "African Westminster? The Parliament of Lesotho," Parliamentary Affairs, XXIII, 2 (Spring 1970).

5 Ibid.; cf. inter alia W. Tordoff, Government & Politics in Tanzania (1967), Ch. II; and Kjekshus, "Question Hour in the Bunge," African Review, II, 3 (1972).

Parliamentary questions are only one method of raising constituency problems. Adjournment motions are another, while private Members' motions and contributions to general debates (e.g. on the Presidential Address or the Appropriation Bill) provide other opportunities. All of these have been utilized by the more active MPs, including some of those selected for special study.¹ For instance, the (BDP) MP for Shoshong, G. S. Mosinyi, raised the problem of boreholes for two villages in the western part of his constituency in a private Member's motion in 1970, followed up with a question the following year, and took it up as the subject of an Adjournment debate early in 1972.² A similar campaign was waged by P. M. Tshane, BNF Member for Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi, over the borehole for Molapowabojang. Over a period of two-and-a-half years he asked four questions and adjourned the House once on the subject.³ In the latter case an interesting point is the MP's concentration on this village in particular; it ties in with the probability that the water syndicate membership was predominantly BNF in its sympathies.⁴

The BDP MP for Mahalapye, G. K. Koma, was one of the most prominent backbenchers. In his frequent contribution to debates he never tired of utilising constituency examples, and bringing up constituency problems, earning the accolade from the Minister of Finance & Development Planning (and Vice-President) of a veiled rebuke aimed at Members from that area who allowed "parochial interests" to take precedence over the national interest.⁵ The same MP used the adjournment motion to

1 I.e. those representing the nine villages studied in Chapter 6.

2 Hansard references: No 33, p. 106 (3 JUL 70); No 37, p. 2 (22 JUN 71); No 40, p. 174 (16 MAR 72)

3 Hansard references: No 31, p. 638 (7 APR 70); No 33, p. 106 (3 JUL 70); Ibid., p. 46 (7 JUL 70); No 36, p. 6 (8 MAR 71); No 41, p. 366, (18 SEP 72).

4 See p. 309. (Note that the constituency is a large one with many villages in a similar predicament.

5 Hansard, 31, p. 133 (19 MAR 70)

good effect, citing prior consultations he had held with the chief and local district councillors,¹ and was able to secure redress of an injustice involving compensation for a railway worker;² this last is an example of a surprisingly infrequent activity.

The MPs for the Mahalapye area were more active individually than the average backbencher and form an unusual example of geographical group activity in Parliament. An example of successful pressure was a series of complaints about a veterinary officer, leading to a Ministerial assurance that the officer had been warned as a result of the MPs' complaints, and would be disciplined if no improvement was forthcoming.³ It is clear that some ministers resented this sort of activity by MPs - witness a remark by the Minister of Health, Labour & Home Affairs criticising the bad relations of the MP for Shoshong with various public employees in Mahalapye.⁴ Coincidentally or not, the Minister concerned (M. P. K. Nwako) represented a nearby constituency (Tswapong North), and one can discern a certain degree of impatience or jealousy at the role of constituency or people's champion performed so assiduously by these backbenchers. Ministers were denied the opportunity to make the same Parliamentary impact, and this may account for the compensating activities characteristic of Ministers (mentioned below), and Nwako's particularly active extra-Parliamentary role.

A rather different pattern characterised the two MPs from the North East, both of them People's Party Members. K. M. Nkhwa was noted particularly for his persistent advocacy of the use of the

1 Hansard, 28, p. 478 (31 MAR 69)

2 Ibid., No. 39, p. 194 (9 DEC 71)

3 Ibid., No. 46, p. 300 (15 AUG 73)

4 Ibid., No. 38, p. 221 (21 SEP 71)

Kalanga language¹ on Radio Botswana. While this was not strictly a constituency matter - Kalanga is widely spoken in the northern part of the Central District - nor Nkhwa the only MP to raise the question,² it was undoubtedly a popular stance to adopt in the Tati West heartland of Kalanga. Nkhwa's leader, P. G. Matante, cultivated the public gallery of the National Assembly with speeches timed for the influx of civil servants at 5 p.m. and did the same thing nationally with a series of no confidence motions in various Ministries. His finest achievement was the setting up by the Government of a commission of enquiry into medical services, resulting from one of these motions.³ Even after losing his official title of Leader of the Opposition in 1969⁴ Matante continued to behave in the same way, covering the national scene,⁵ rather than acting as a rather embattled constituency MP might have been expected to do, ostentatiously voicing constituency problems.

MPs AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

By and large the institution of local government attracted little interest from MPs in the First Parliament.⁶ By contrast, when changes in the system were introduced, the whole question became a live party-political issue in the Second Parliament. A precursor of such argument was criticism from K. M. Nkhwa of the strengthening of the District

1 E.g. ibid., No. 33, p. 45 (2 JUL 70); the Minister's reply was to refer the MP to previous (negative) replies to his questions (Hansard, 22, p. 11 and 23, p. 78).

2 Others who occasionally raised it were the northern BDP MP Chilume, and BPP Leader P. G. Matante.

3 Hansard, 26, pp. 208-228 (13 DEC 68)

4 Following the 1969 General Election, when three BNF, three BPP and one BIP Members failed to agree on a Leader of the Opposition.

5 Bathoefi Gaseitsiwe adopted a similar approach as BNF Leader.

6 A typical contribution was a plea (from the MP for Boteti) for Local Government auditors; the reply was that there was already such a department in existence! (Hansard, 24, pp. 203, 211 [29 MAR 68])

Commissioner's role vis-à-vis local councils which he saw as a euphemism for dictatorship.¹

The arguments between the Government and Opposition sides (and this was one issue where there was a definite cleavage between the two sides of the House) became heated as a result of the Government's decision to add extra nominated members to a number of councils where the BDP had lost seats to various opposition candidates.² The immediate reaction was a private Member's motion (tabled by the BPP Deputy Leader)³ calling for the withdrawal of the relevant Statutory Instruments;³ it was defeated after an acrimonious debate.⁴ A similar fate met a motion tabled by BPP Leader Matante (Francistown & Tati East) calling for the repeal of Section 15 of the Local Government (Amendment) Act.⁵ A notable feature of the debate was the absence of any criticism of Government policy by the otherwise independent-minded BDP backbenchers,⁶ and the Opposition solidarity with the motion.

The increased bureaucratisation of district government was likewise the target of Opposition criticism, spearheaded by Southern District BNF MPs. Bathoefi Gaseitsiwe made the point that the introduction of a further enhanced role for District Commissioners as chairmen of the District Development Committees indicated the failure of the Government's prior introduction of expatriate volunteer Council Advisers, the justification for which had been the need to prepare Councils for increased responsibilities.⁷ In similar vein P. M. Tshane (BNF Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi)

1 Ibid., p. 430 (31 MAR 68)

2 See Appendix A

3 Government Gazette, VII, 59 (7 NOV 69)

4 Hansard, 30, pp. 377 ff. (27 NOV 69)

5 Ibid., No. 36, pp. 667 ff. (2 APR 71)

6 Instead BDP backbenchers called for more money for the Councils - e.g. G. S. Mosinyi (Shoshong) in Hansard, 49, p. 35 (13 MAR 74)

7 Ibid., No. 35, p. 72 (16 DEC 70)

asked pointedly if the introduction of greater responsibilities for the District Commissioner was a tacit admission of the disappointing performance of the Government-nominated councillors, who had been supposed to add competence to the councils.¹ In reply the Government repeated that all those moves had as their objective nothing other than the strengthening of local authorities and the improvement of their performance.²

MPs AND LOCAL COUNCILS

Instances of MPs acting as Parliamentary spokesmen for their local councils exist but are far from numerous. Sometimes a general complaint was raised - for example the failure of the Ministries to reply to correspondence from District Councils, mentioned by a BDP backbencher from the North West District,³ echoing similar complaints about MPs' own failure to get replies from central Government departments.⁴ The latter led to a reliance on formal methods of articulating grievances but the Councils seem to have resorted rarely to contacting their MPs with a view to having something taken up in the National Assembly.

After the period covered by this study one Council - the Kgatleng District Council - sent an official delegate to lobby one of their MPs (and a former Chairman of the Council), but this was so novel as to merit special mention in the Daily News:⁵ other cases of Councils' resolving to make contact with a Parliamentary representative or chief are documented elsewhere.⁶ Occasionally the Council Secretary would

1 Hansard, 37, p. 25 (22 JUN 71)

2 Ibid., p. 29 (22 JUN 71)

3 Ibid., No. 48, p. 34 (28 NOV 73)

4 E.g. from the BDP member for Kanye North, B. R. Chibana, Hansard, 24, p. 196 (29 MAR 68)

5 BDN, 26 MAR 75

6 See pp. 188 and 242

copy a letter to an MP.¹ At other times when backbenchers appeared to be acting as a spokesman for the Council the initiative came from the MPs - who asked, for instance, why the position on boreholes had not been explained to the Central District Council,² or why a lock had not been supplied for a Council office.³

In some cases it is difficult to know whether ostensible pleas on behalf of Councils are in reality veiled criticism of the local authority: instances are a suggestion that each Council should have its own drilling rig,⁴ or a statement that the MP had "tried to speak to the Central District Council but they are not in a position to do anything."⁵

Overt criticism there certainly was. The Southern District Council's handling of its responsibilities for education and water were criticised from both sides of the House.⁶ The three BDP MPs from the Mahalapye area all commented adversely on the Central District Council's performance with respect to matimela,⁷ assistance for self-help projects,⁸ and the mass transfer of teachers.⁹ Furthermore three powerful Council Secretaries were the target of criticism in the National Assembly. The Central District Council Secretary was criticised by the BDP MP for

1 This was done by the Central District Council Secretary to the MP for Mahalapye. Hansard, 33, p. 55 (3 JUL 70)

2 Asked by the MP for Shoshong. Hansard, 35, p. 66 (16 DEC 70)

3 The Member for Mahalapye, who asked the question, stated that he had been in telephone contact with the Central District Council on the matter. Hansard, 39, p. 92 (9 DEC 71)

4 Ibid., No. 27, p. 304, (27 MAR 69); asked by a Southern District MP.

5 Hansard, No. 31, p. 115 (19 MAR 70)

6 Respectively by Chibana (Kanye North) for the BDP and Tshane (Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi) for the BNF. Hansard references: No. 27, p. 410 (29 MAR 69) and No. 41, p. 366 (18 SEP 72).

7 Ibid., No. 24, p. 149 (29 MAR 68); No. 26, p. 202 (13 DEC 68); No. 31 p. 141 (20 MAR 70)

8 Ibid., No. 36, p. 314 (23 MAR 71)

9 Ibid., No. 44, p. 6 (12 MAR 73). See also above, p. 189.

Mahalapye for his handling of the meeting attended (as an observer) by Mr. Koma;¹ as has been seen the councillors closed ranks behind the Secretary in reaction.² In similar vein the Southern District Council Secretary was criticised by the BNF MP for Kanye North for allegedly submitting his own motions to the Council³ - an allegation repeated by the BNF in the Council Chamber,⁴ and a rare example of party co-ordination between the district and national institutions. The BPP Member for Tati West also queried a circular issued by the newly appointed North East District Council Secretary and had the satisfaction of seeing his complaint upheld by the Minister of Local Government & Lands.⁵ A certain rivalry between MP and Council Secretary can be clearly discerned.

A degree of ambiguity surrounded the constitutional position of the local authorities vis-à-vis MPs: in other words the application of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility. This arose from a number of questions brought up by MPs (concerning Food-for-Work projects and water supplies). The answer from the Minister concerned was to the effect that these were either the direct responsibility of the relevant Council,⁶ or that the determination of priorities for applications for Government assistance lay with the local authority.⁷ Backbenchers on both sides were dissatisfied, however, and insisted that the Government accept responsibility. The following extract from a debate on a private Member's motion by G. S. Mosinyi (BDP, Shoshong), asking the Government

1 Hansard, 24, p. 422 (31 MAR 68)

2 See above, p. 156

3 Hansard, 38, p. 203 (21 SEP 71)

4 See above, p. 107

5 Hansard, 36, p. 183 (17 MAR 71)

6 Ibid., No. 25, p. 2 (8 AUG 68); No. 28, p. 32 (13 MAY 69)

7 Ibid., No. 31, p. 638 (7 APR 70). The questioner was Tshane, the subject the Molapowabojang borehole.

to drill boreholes in his constituency, illustrates the different interpretations:

MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LANDS (MR. KGABO):. . . .

My advice to Members of Parliament is please always participate in planning by Councils. They can do so, Mr. Speaker, by always writing to Councils every year and bring to their attention any projects which they feel must be attended to.

.
. . . . I had to advise Members that it is not wise to come to this House and tell a Minister to treat a matter seriously, but failing to advise the Council at the local level how best they can plan their development.

.
MR. KOMA: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we have been shocked by the Minister of Local Government and Lands in the way he treats the matter put before this House. Mr. Speaker, we are not Councillors, we are Parliamentarians. We have a place where we can come and speak for our constituents, and that place is in this House. (Mr. Matante: Hear! Hear!) Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for a Member of Parliament to be referred to a District Council which has no machinery and manpower. We were elected by the people to come and speak for them. Those people were promised that if you elected this Government conditions would be better. (Mr. Matante: But the Government doesn't do anything.) We cannot under any circumstances, Mr. Speaker, accept what has been said by the Minister.¹

Later in the same Meeting, when the BNF Member for Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi adjourned the House on the subject of boreholes, similar arguments were rehearsed with another Cabinet Minister, as this passage shows:

MR. TSHANE: Mr. Speaker, I think that the argument that it is not the responsibility of Government to maintain the rural or the village water supply cannot be accepted and must be discouraged altogether. . . . I say this, Mr. Speaker, because arguments have been brought to this National Assembly to the effect that the matters which concern the problems of water supply to the people in the areas where there are District Councils cannot be dealt with in the National Assembly. Mr. Speaker, sir, I think the hon. Minister of Local Government and Lands if he is a link between the central and Local Governments he is of course responsible for seeing that the Councils do really cater for the people in needy cases. . . .

¹ Hansard, 33, pp. 54-55 (3JUL 70)

MINISTER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND WATER AFFAIRS

(MR. SEGOKGO): I have also taken the point raised by the hon. Member about perhaps informing the Councils about their responsibilities. I have personally spoken to a few District Councils and in fact I have written to all District Councils asking them to discuss this very same problem, drawing their attention to the fact that the village water supply is part of their responsibility and that they are expected to do their best. And I am prepared to give technical assistance and knowledge to District Councils if they ask for it. . . .¹

From the above debates, and others germane to the "pyramid" theory, it is clear that backbenchers jealously guard their status as representatives of the people and are much less interested in institutions than in issues.

A number of other issues pursued by backbenchers were related to local government. Several BDP MPs from the Central District raised the decentralisation question,² alleging Serowe domination,³ while there were repeated criticisms of the Ngwato Land Board⁴ and land boards in general, including allegations of corruption in land allocation.⁵ Such criticism may simply reflect MPs' watchdog role, or may be a manifestation of an attempt at asserting a leadership role in the district.

MPs AND OTHER LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

As has been noted,⁶ MPs on the whole had relatively little contact with the Councils, whether by correspondence with officials, visits to Council offices or attendance at Council meetings. There are exceptions

1 Ibid., pp. 146-148 (7 JUL 70)

2 See above, pp. 190-193

3 Hansard, 24, pp. 418-422 (31 MAR 68); 31, pp. 301-305, 306 (24 MAR 70)

4 By G. G. Sebeso (BDP, Tswapong South): Hansard, 40, p. 152 (8 SEP 72); 44, p. 144 (15 MAR 73); 45, p. 85 (25 MAY 73); 48, p. 159 (4 DEC 73)

5 By Bathoefi Gaseitsiwe (Hansard, 49, p. 256 [19 MAR 74]) and Sebeso (note "4" above). It is worth noting that both those MPs were former members of the traditional administration.

6 Above, pp. 187-188 and 242. (In the Southern District, any such contact was conspicuous by its absence until the Council Chairman was co-opted to the National Assembly.)

to this pattern. The obvious one is those MPs who were simultaneously councillors - e.g. Southern District Council Chairman Chibana (Specially Elected mid-way through the Second Parliament).¹ Others active in this respect included ex-Councillor Jankie (BDP, Ghanzi), and in the Central District the MPs for Bobirwa (Sikunyana, from 1969) and Tswapong North. The last mentioned, Cabinet Minister Nwako, was rivalled only by the Minister of Local Government & Lands (1966-73), who was the "party boss" for the Kweneng.²

District Development Committees

What was true of the Councils was true a fortiori for the District Development committees. Chambers & Feldman record only one known case of an MP's attendance at a DDC.³ Mr. Sikunyana has taken an active interest in the workings of the Central DDC, visiting the office of the District Officer (Development) and tabling a Parliamentary question asking for constituency representation on the Committee.⁴ But MPs were not invited to meetings of the DDC and in general lacked information about its modus operandi.

Village Development Committees

As has been stated in Chapter 6, most MPs were not especially interested in the VDCs, as opposed to other organisations, in their constituencies. The main exception was the VDC of the village where the MP actually resided, particularly in the case of Mahalapye and Kalamare.⁵ A further indication of the importance of residence was provided by the assertion by the BNF Member for Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi

1 See Chapter 3, passim

2 See R. Vengroff, "Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana," (1972), especially pp. 186-195.

3 Op. cit., p. 211

4 Hansard, 49, p. 126 (15 MAR 74)

5 See especially pp. 291-292.

that he was actively involved in a VDC, not in his constituency but in Kanye.¹ But the number of VDCs which were the subject of Parliamentary comment was tiny, the main one being Palapye where the BIP-BDP clash led to two Parliamentary questions from the Independence Party Leader² and a Daily News report.³ In general, however, MPs' interest in VDCs was most likely to be sparked by the prospect of an opening ceremony for a completed VDC project.

Political Parties

MPs' involvement with their extra-Parliamentary party organisation has two dimensions. In the first place parties can be seen in terms of policy, and ought to provide a link between the activities of the Parliamentarians on the one hand and the Councillors and other rural party activists on the other. It is a reflection on the lack of ideological content in the Batswana parties that there should be so little evidence of a co-ordinated approach to questions of policy. Thus the unambiguous denunciation by the BPP MP for Tati West of the plan for regrouping villages in the North East⁴ was at odds with the position adopted (gradually and cautiously, it is true) by the BPP Councillor N. Gunda, the unofficial leader of the Opposition on the North East District Council, in favour of village grouping.⁵ Against this can be set the unusual tie-up between BNF councillors and the MP for Ngwaketse/Kgalagadi on the question of appeals against corporal punishment in Customary Courts: Tshane claimed that the Government's

1 Hansard, 34, p. 168 (4 NOV 70)

2 Ibid., No. 50, pp. 1-2 (24 JUN 74) and p. 67 (27 JUN 74)

3 See above, p. 338

4 BDN, 11 MAY 77

5 Kgotla meeting, Mapoka 3 JUL 74 (eyewitness account); see also p. 250 above. The BPP were united in rejecting compulsory grouping.

Customary Courts (Amendment) Bill was derived from the initiative of BNF councillors in the Southern District.¹ The BDP alone made visible, if sporadic, efforts at political education for councillors in which MPs were involved.²

Indicative of the fact that parties were more electoral machines than ideologically-united bodies is the fact that the only demonstrations to be organised by the BNF and BPP were in late 1969 to protest against the packing of Councils with extra Government nominees and the subsequent Council committee elections rather than on matters of general policy. These involved walkouts from the Southern, Kgatleng and North East District Councils and the Francistown Town Council, and a BPP protest march through the streets of Francistown.³

Kgotla and Freedom Square

A main form of extra-Parliamentary political activity to occupy MPs was undoubtedly public meetings, often organised in tours which were quite commonly announced in advance, and reported afterwards, by Radio Botswana and the Daily News. Tours of constituencies were certainly undertaken by backbenchers, but they paled into insignificance - even allowing for the disproportionate media coverage - compared with the extensive tours undertaken by Ministers, especially during the dry winter months (when travelling was easier). Such Ministerial tours often included the Minister's own constituency,⁴ and this arguably was

1 Hansard, 40, p. 12 (6 MAR 72); see above, p. 147

2 E.g. report in BDN, 17 APR 69, of a seminar for party activists to elucidate Government policy. Such events usually followed some occasion such as an Annual Conference.

3 References: BDN, 20 NOV 69; ibid.; p. 241 above; Francistown Town Council Minutes, 28 NOV 69; BDN, 24 DEC 69.

4 The Daily News abounds in such reports. E.g. Minister of Education B. C. Thema touring his Lobatse/Barolong constituency, BDN, 23 JUN 67, 21 JUL 71.

aimed at counterbalancing the limited Parliamentary chances for Ministers to shine as constituency champions. From the BDP point of view, too, the greater coverage given Ministerial tours by the Daily News redressed the advantage afforded by the Daily News and radio reporting of Question Time, which was fairly full.¹

Ministers in particular, but also some backbenchers of all parties, not infrequently combined trips to hold "official" kgotla meetings to explain Government policies and report on Parliamentary business with separate "Freedom Square" party political meetings² and meetings with party members³ - the last-mentioned often in connection with a forthcoming party conference⁴ or party elections.⁵ As has been noted in Chapter 7, MPs jealously guarded their role as constituency party boss, and this is true for some whose voices were seldom heard in the National Assembly but who made their mark with many constituency questions.

CONCLUSION

The performance of MPs - their level of activity, the matters which interested them, the extent of their preoccupation with their constituents' problems - varied considerably, and virtually independently of their party affiliation. But what is very clear is that MPs generally acted independently from the local authorities and prized their status as constituency representatives, seeing themselves as deriving a

1 This was partly for the pragmatic reason that the script of questions and answers was made available to reporters at the beginning of the daily sitting.

2 E.g. BDN, 28 APR 69, 25 JUL 69

3 E.g. ibid., 30 APR 73

4 E.g. ibid., 14 JAN 71, 18 FEB 71

5 E.g. ibid., 27 JAN 70

mandate from the people, which entitled them to criticise both central and local government rather than act as go-betweens or even Council spokesmen. The "pyramid" theory in this aspect does not hold; in metaphorical terms the model is revealed to be not so much a pyramid as a cake-stand.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter brings out for discussion a number of themes and problems which have recurred at various points in the study. They refer to the internal workings of the institution of Local Government and to the place of Local Government in the political system, with particular reference to the task of "development".

The first question to be raised concerns the problem of distinguishing the particular from the general. The detailed examination of the proceedings of the three Councils, selected to provide as representative a sample as possible, has thrown some light on the hitherto rather opaque nature of party differences in particular, and Councillors' behaviour as representatives of the people in general. Chapter 2 went in depth into a number of aspects, and some configurations, however fuzzy, did emerge from the mass of aggregate data. This has to be balanced against the particular ecology of each of the three Districts (explored in Chapters 3-5) and it can be seen how the factors peculiar to one District impart a different flavour to each Council. The diversity encountered in Local Government in Botswana stands out plainly; a relevant question is the extent to which generalisations can be made which are strongly enough rooted to have predictive force.

Three factors must be noted in answering this question. The first is size. Some of the Councils are small bodies and it is worth recalling that the thirteen Councils between them account for a population the size

of Edinburgh but scattered over a territory as big as France. The smaller the Council, the less confident the researcher can be that the particular is not stronger than the general. Moreover the length of time the system has been in operation makes firm conclusions about Council behaviour difficult.

This is most clearly seen in the second factor, the impact of individuals. Certain Councillors, for different reasons, made a strong impact on their Councils. In some cases the influence could be ascribed to education or status otherwise acquired; in others it was more a question of a developed political sense and a speedy realisation of how the administrative process operated and could be affected by individual initiative. In the Southern District, for instance, an interviewee commented that only three people (apart from himself) really understood what was going on in the Council - the Chairman, the Secretary, and one BDP Councillor.¹

The third factor has been referred to at various points in the study, namely the time factor. District Councils have each passed through various phases, just as the system in general has changed. Clearly Local Government in Botswana is still in transition.

"DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT"

The Framework

Before commenting on the nature of Botswana's local government system - with special reference to the elected District Councils - it is worth recalling some of the official statements made at the time when the system was introduced.²

The Local Government Committee, set up to advise the then colonial government in 1964 and consisting of politicians of three parties, Chiefs,

1 Who held the record for the number of questions and motions tabled - and thus brought the BDP average up significantly.

2 In the quotations which follow, emphasis has been added.

and civil servants,

agreed that provision should be made for a non-racial, representative and responsible system of local government in Bechuanaland. The system should as far as possible be a natural development from the existing system of tribal administration.¹

Accepting the report in its essentials, the Protectorate Government went rather further in its explicit espousal of democracy as the basis for the new local government system, as the following extracts from the Legislative Council Paper show:

- (i) The policy of Her Majesty's Government and the desires of the people of Bechuanaland today are in essentials the same: . . . that Bechuanaland should be governed democratically - and this means that administration at every level should be non-racial, representative and responsible.²
- (ii) It is essential that constitutional development at the centre should be balanced by the growth of democratic institutions throughout the country. Freedom and responsibility in thought and action must be stimulated at every level if they are to be fully understood and given effective expression, and one of the best checks to any tendency to authoritarianism is a widespread cultivation of these habits of mind and the readiness of people at every level of society to play their part in the conduct of local affairs.³
- (iii) The Committee advocates the creation of a non-racial representative system. . . . District Councils should have a substantial majority of elected members.⁴
- (iv) It is a matter of great importance and urgency that the Territory's rapid constitutional advance should be matched by an efficient and democratic system of local government.⁵

1 Bechuanaland Protectorate, Report of Local Government Committee/Mafoko a Komiti ka ga Puso ya mo gae (1964), p. 1

2 Bechuanaland Protectorate, Legislative Council, Local Government in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (1964), p. 3

3 Ibid., p. 4

4 Ibid., p. 7

5 Ibid., p. 12

These principles, enunciated by the colonial Government, were accepted by the incoming BDP administration under the Internal Self-Government constitution of 1965, as the first Minister of Local Government, Tsheko Tsheko, made clear in his speech to the Legislative Assembly on the Second Reading of the Local Government Bill:

As much as the people demanded a democratic form of government at the centre, they demanded the same at Local Government level.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, meets this pressing need and demand for participation by the people in the management of their own affairs. The principle involved is to establish non-racial, democratic and representative Local Councils with full executive powers to replace the present Advisory Councils. . . .

May I conclude by emphasising that the idea is to establish throughout the country a democratic Local Government where the substantial majority of members would be elected members even if there are a few nominated members as the need may arise. This should go a long way towards fulfilling the requirements of democracy which in our case is the government of the people, for the people, by the elected people, not as before.¹

In the short debate which followed, one of the BDP backbenchers supported the Bill in the following words:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the establishment of these Councils will . . . show the world that our Government is democratic in setting up District Councils.²

Finally the Minister of Local Government and Lands (still Mr. Tsheko), in his first annual report after the establishment of the system, confirmed that

The successful introduction and maintenance of a modern and democratic form of Local Government is an essential feature of the Botswana Government's plan for this country.³

1 Hansard, 15, pp. 29-30 (7 DEC 65)

2 Ibid., p. 32 (7 DEC 65)

3 Republic of Botswana, Annual Report of the Ministry of Local Government & Lands for the Year 1966, p. 1

The above statements leave little doubt that the reform was seen as the implementation of democratic ideology at the local level. Nevertheless the term democracy in this context is relative, and not only in the sense that British-style local government is a compromise between the local self-government ideal and the fact that the powers delegated to local authorities can be varied and taken away by the same central government and legislature that granted them in the first place. Democracy in the context of the Bechuanaland Protectorate meant essentially one-man-one-vote, i.e. an end to the previous racial segregation in political institutions (hence the repeated references to non-racialism) and, more important, an end to the old traditional system whereby the Chief of each clan was the Local Authority, advised by a council elected in most cases by acclamation.

These two features taken together go far towards explaining both the provision for nominated members of the Councils and why there was no fuss from the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly before Independence about the provision: it seemed irrelevant to the objectives of achieving a non-racial institution to replace the power of the Chiefs. Indeed the desire to include both the Chiefs and Europeans was manifested in the nominations made in 1966.

A further relevant factor is the history of the proposal for adding non-elected members. As it originated in the Report of the Local Government Committee in 1964, the proposal was for the power of co-option by the elected members of the Council together with the Chairman of the Council (i.e. in most cases the local Paramount Chief), with the latter intimating his nominations first¹ - a system very reminiscent of the procedure for electing "Specially Elected" Members of Parliament.²

1 Report of the Local Government Committee, op. cit., p. 2

2 Constitution, Schedule

When the Bill came to the House of Chiefs for consideration, the Chiefs recommended that the power of co-option envisaged by the Local Government Committee be replaced by the power of nomination by the Chairman of each Council of a number of members "in order to ensure adequate representation . . . of . . . traditional interests and other non-partisan interests."¹ The Minister of Local Government implicitly accepted the idea but in fact the statute as eventually passed left the power in the hands of the Government,² and it was thus an easy matter for the Office of the President to issue amending Statutory Instruments³ in 1969 increasing the number of political appointees and, ironically perhaps, removing the Chiefs from their ex officio positions as Council Chairmen. The objective of reducing the influence of the Chiefs having thus been achieved, the aim now became the creation of politically compliant Councils.⁴

The implications of this are discussed below, but it should be seen in connexion with two other linked changes - the stress on Councils as development agencies, and the creation of a new non-elected district-level structure involving District Commissioners as key figures (at least on paper); these aspects are also explored below.

Council and People

One of the main interests in studying local government lay in their status as representative bodies, an interest heightened by the continuing

1 House of Chiefs, Minutes of the Second Meeting, p. 6 (17 NOV 65), cited in J. H. Proctor, "The House of Chiefs and the Political Development of Botswana," Journal of Modern African Studies, VI, 1 (1968) p. 71

2 But suggestions from Preparatory Commissions were sent to the Ministry; many were accepted but not all. See for instance Minutes of the Final Meeting of the Preparatory Commission, Central District Council, Serowe, 20-21 JUN 66.

3 S.I. Nos 102-111, Government Gazette, VII, 59 (7 NOV 69)

4 See Appendix "A" for the Government's defence of its action.

lack of reliable information about the aspirations of rural Batswana. It was for this reason that the main issues raised by Councillors in the three District Councils studied have been described and analysed in such depth. Still the question remains: how representative are Councillors? It is clear that they are not typical of a cross-section of their electorate, but if socio-economic cleavages are in fact little developed (an assumption which itself deserves close analysis) the main indicators of their representativeness, and hence the faithfulness with which they reflect the aspirations of the people, are, firstly, electoral participation and, secondly, the degree of consultation undertaken by Councillors once elected.

In analysing the degree of electoral participation it is easy to detect the decreasing percentage turnout of voters in local, as in national, elections. Thus at the last Local Government elections the District turnout (in contested seats) ranged from 22.3% in the Kgalagadi District to 41.2% in the Southern District.

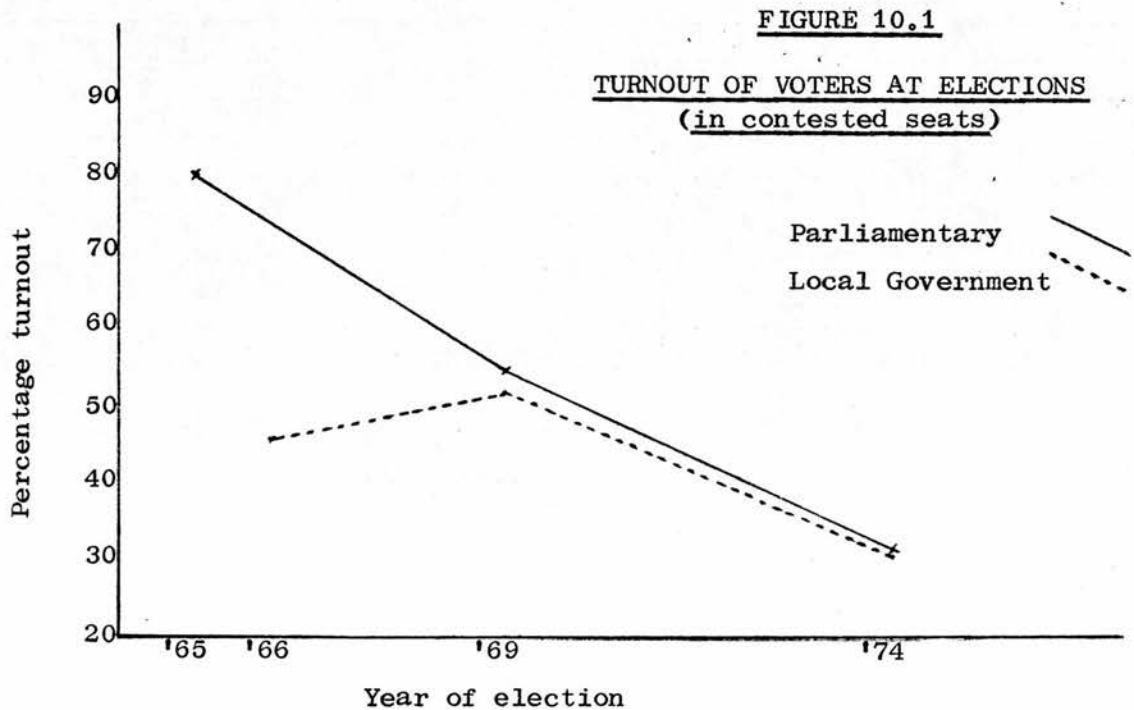


TABLE 10.2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION RESULTS

	<u>1966</u>			<u>1969</u>			<u>1974</u>		
	Cands.	Cllrs.	Unopp.	Cands.	Cllrs.	Unopp.	Cands.	Cllrs.	Unopp.
BDP	163	136	81	165	112	46	176	149	66
BIP	21	5	--	16	6	--	15	4	--
BNF	7	0	--	73	23	--	58	12	--
BPP	49	21	--	44	23	--	46	11	--
Ind	18	3*	1**	3	1	--	1	0	--
Total	258	165 ⁺	82	301	165 ⁺	46 ⁺	296	176	66
Turnout (overall)	45.5%			51.9%			30.3%		
Lowest (Dist.)	15.2%			27.2%			11.2%		
Highest (Dist.)	81.3%			78.5%			52.2%		
Highest (Town)	83.8%			78.6%			43.0%		

* 2 Independents with BDP support

** 1 Independent with BDP support

⁺ 1 Vacancy filled in subsequent by-election

From Fig. 10.1 and Table 10.2 it can be seen how the turnout in contested seats has dropped. The other factor (also illustrated in the table) of importance is party. Obviously it depends largely on the Opposition parties as to whether the people are given a choice; the nomination procedures are generally conducted privately by the parties.¹ The people of course cannot since 1969 be certain of unseating a Councillor (if he adheres to the BDP), since rejection at the polls is liable to be rewarded by a Government nomination. Moreover this applies equally to candidates who have crossed the carpet to the BDP and those who have never been elected in the first place. The a priori effect of this is to devalue the whole electoral process - and incidentally transfers the power of patronage from the strictly Party organisation to Ministerial level (the President and the Minister of Local Government &

¹ The "Kuli primary" system notwithstanding. See A. Kuper, Kalahari Village Politics (1970), pp. 56-59

Lands in particular). From the point of view of the ordinary voter, the most that can be achieved by voting in a Local Government election is the return of an Opposition candidate who will be part of the minority on the Council.¹ It is pointless to vote for a programme other than that of the BDP when it is known that the Government will frustrate the wishes of the local electorate.

Thus the Government's policy institutionalises the various Opposition parties as parties of dissent on the Councils, while the Opposition parties themselves seem to have accepted such a role in the National Assembly for the foreseeable future. This situation - the universal application of the one-party-dominant system - is then described as "participation" by Government spokesmen. It is noticeable that the words "participation" and "consultation" are increasingly used instead of, or qualifying, the more unambiguous term "democracy". This is true of references to other institutions too, such as VDCs.

For participation to have substance it is important for Councillors - whether elected or appointed - to communicate with the people. The weaknesses in the system of popular consultation are easy to see, and have been frequently commented upon in conferences, seminars and training sessions on local government. Usually the question is divided into two elements, those of prior consultation before a Council meeting, and of subsequent reporting back, the assumption being that Councillors should do both through the medium of the kgotla - which should entail at least eight kgotla meetings per village per annum. Not surprisingly this level of activity has proved an unattainable ideal and the falling attendances at kgotla meetings is commented upon below.

1 Ironically, the return of an Opposition Councillor may effectively double the representation of the ward if the Government oblige by appointing the defeated BDP candidate to the Council. It is doubtful if this is appreciated by the local electorate however.

An alternative approach however is to look at the problem in terms of individual and corporate contact and it is in the light of the latter that the more obvious opportunities are being missed. Thus the public's right of access to Council meetings¹ is hardly ever brought to the attention of the public. Outside the towns, attendance in the public gallery is minimal and epitomised by the position in some District Councils whereby one or two chairs can be brought into the chamber if anyone wants to sit in on the meeting - apart from the phalanx of officials (of central and local government) who are normally in attendance. Even here the vagaries of the application of Standing Orders, which provide that a Council may resolve to "sit in committee"² or "go into Committee",³ sometimes mean that the public (and the press, and sometimes even council officials!) are excluded because the Council are discussing a committee's report; in other Councils the real reason for resolving to "go into committee" is to allow members to smoke!

Given that most members of the public are unlikely to know of a Council meeting, and/or that it may be a long distance to travel, the onus would seem reasonably to rest on the Government Department of Information to inform the public at least about Council decisions and activities. Information Assistants however are grossly underutilised and spend much of their time sitting in an office issuing the Daily News free to callers. Moreover the suggestion that Council minutes should be posted up in all villages was greeted with amazement at a conference of local councillors and staff, who stressed the cost and logistical

1 Model Standing Order 16, in Republic of Botswana, Ministry of Local Government & Lands, Handbook for Chairmen, Secretaries and Members of District (and Town) Councils

2 Ibid., S.O. 56 (f)

3 Ibid., Appendix "A", para. 16

problems of doing this, even where Setswana minutes were available.¹ Radio Botswana and the Daily News however could cover council meetings in much greater detail than they do and Councillors would welcome this;² the hurdle is the distaste of many of the Information Department's staff for this sort of role.

Most Councillors would accept that the public are ignorant of Council business, and see themselves as engaged in an uphill struggle to keep the people informed, the problem being compounded of two elements: the general problem of attracting attendance at kgotla meetings and the problem of distance for Councillors with large wards to cover (in the Central District some wards are half the size of a Parliamentary constituency). But Councillors, like MPs, tend to see themselves as effective representatives of the people, firstly by definition, because they are "the people's choice," and secondly because they rely principally upon informal contacts to keep themselves informed. Many of these elected representatives in fact adopt a Bagehotesque position in the debating chamber and a dignified one (in which ritual plays an important part, e.g. speeches at opening ceremonies) outside it.

If such an informal approach to consultation provides no safeguards against complacency, can one look to Village Development Committees, as the "lowest tier of democracy", to provide rather more systematic inputs of demands? Here the problem, as has been shown, is one of communication in two directions: vertically to the district headquarters, and horizontally to the people of the village. As regards the former, it is clear that the mere constitutional device of ex officio VDC membership

1 Model Standing Order 74 states that minutes are to be kept in English (ibid.)

2 A request for this to be done was made by Councillors in 1975. BDN, 14 FEB 75.

for Councillors does not guarantee anything, particularly if the Councillor concerned does not actually have his home in the village in question. Instead communication between the centre and the periphery of the district has become increasingly dominated by correspondence and field trips by officials. A rather different centre-periphery problem obtains within the "village", where the movement of people to the fields, and even cattle posts, formerly seasonal in nature, has acquired an increasingly permanent look. Even when people are within easy distance of the kgotla they have to be convinced that a meeting is worthwhile, since the coinage has been debased by over-frequent use (by itinerant civil servants from many Departments, as well as others). Finally there is the question of the representativeness of the VDCs, which are elected, it is true; but elections in some villages are very infrequent and the amount of choice varies considerably, with acclamation used in some places instead of actual voting. Moreover VDCs tend to be easily dominated by the resident, ex officio members and reflect their professional interests and those of the central village, while women in particular are under-represented. This problem is inextricably bound up with the question of the real purpose of VDCs and whether they are to be essentially village councils or voluntary development committees.

Parties, Policies and Configurations

Almost all Councillors sought election on a party ticket; the number of Independent candidates dropped from 18 in 1965 through three in 1969 to only one in 1974. Independents have defeated BDP official candidates only three times.¹ Moreover a number of Councillors officially crossed the carpet (in the three Councils studied, the BDP gained one each from the BPP, BNF and Independent; elsewhere there was a spate of

¹ In 1965 in Lobatse Town Council and the North East District Council; in 1969 in Kgalagadi District. Two of these victors subsequently joined the BDP group.

resignations from the BNF in 1970 in the wake of the party split)). Party adherence is then of some importance for Councillors. When it comes to the behaviour of Councillors, however, as a factor party affiliation has very limited analytical application. It does assist in explaining the pattern of committee elections, and elections to the post of Chairman and Vice-Chairman - although even here the impact of party caucussing has to be studied in the particular context of the Council studied. Thus in the Southern District in 1969 the BNF members refused to participate in committee elections (as a protest against the Government's nomination of defeated BDP candidates) and found themselves with no committee representation. In similar circumstances in the North East the BDP group proceeded to elect BPP councillors, in absentia, in roughly the same proportions as they had held in the previous session.

Likewise the support attracted by formal motions debated by the same Councils bore some relation to party but solidarity fell far short of maximum. Informality and a tendency to follow the kgotla norm of debating tended to mean that issues were treated on their merits. Had parties had a definite ideology, applicable to local government issues, the position could have been very different; and if especially parties had represented clear-cut socio-economic or communal interests the enigma could have been unravelled. But certainly for the BNF in the Southern District there was no clear policy line to distinguish it from the majority party; and the identification of the BNF with the nuclear Bangwaketse clan was weakened by the Government's policy of appointing defeated Bangwaketse candidates.¹ In the North East, ethnic minorities were so small as to be unrepresented. Here, however, certain differences

1 The result was a certain amount of grumbling by the Barolong minority (all of whom in fact were BDP) against the rest (rather than a BNF versus BDP cleavage with ethnic overtones).

of policy and socio-economic interest did distinguish the BPP from the BDP. The BPP did try to behave as the "people's party", challenging the commercial interests of their opponents and making much of the running. Nevertheless, informality and consensualism exercised a strong influence in the Council chamber in Tatitown too, and this allowed Councillors of both parties to achieve success with various initiatives.

In summary, party affiliations are an unreliable guide to policy-making, and, while the "ins versus outs" syndrome has a certain force,¹ this must be tempered by an appreciation of the differences (however elusive) between the two Opposition parties studied. It must however be noted that on average Opposition councillors have been more active in the Council in formal initiatives - questions and motions - than their elected BDP counterparts, who in turn have been more active than their nominated colleagues, and that this pattern was consistently found.

An alternative explanation of Councillors' aggregate behaviour was sought in the geographical factor. In particular two points emerged. One was the existence of a broad centre-periphery² dichotomy whereby the more central Councillors were overrepresented on Committees,³ while the tendency to raise local ward problems was more marked amongst Councillors from outlying parts of the Districts concerned (Central and Southern). But Councillors did not commonly combine along geographical

1 In the South East District Council, which had three parties represented on it, the situation was described thus: "The BPP tend to argue with the BDP and the BNF tag along with the BPP. But the BDP want to be seen to be the boss."

2 Wiseman found this phenomenon in the Kgatleng District but attributed it to the party cleavage between Mochudi and the rest of the District. J. A. Wiseman, "The Organisation of Political Conflict in Botswana 1966-1973" (1976), p. 296.

3 The explanation that this was for reasons of convenience does not deny the validity of the syndrome but simply indicates that it was not a deliberate centralist ploy.

lines in pursuit of local interests, and when they did so in an obvious way it tended to be self-defeating. Thus the geographical factor exerted some influence, but even less than party.

As a final comment on configurations of Councillors' activities it has to be admitted that the search for a neat pattern is doomed to failure. This has something to do with the nature of the parties - their lack of a clear programme, and their complacency, in particular - but this could change, for instance as a result of the advent of a new educated generation of politically conscious younger people. What is lacking at present is a sufficiently large political class to fill the vacuum, given the physical problems of communication in Botswana, though the limit to the amount of patronage available is bound to lead to continuing Opposition candidature for election.¹ Another important feature is the small size of most Councils, which militates against the expression of a hard doctrinaire party line. This too could change if serious conflicts of interest came to be expressed openly; at present the level of expectations is fairly low.

The Traditional System

Since a major objective of, and justification for the new system of local government was the curbing of the power of the Chiefs, it was only to be expected that the chieftainship in general should view the new system and everything connected with it with an attitude ranging from reluctant acceptance through suspicion to downright resentment. Certainly the Government did not mince its words in countless addresses to the traditional rulers, particularly the (Paramount) Chiefs of the eight Tswana clans. Two extracts from the proceedings of the House of

¹ An indication of this is one Southern District Councillor, who, after his defeat in 1969 on the BDP ticket, joined the BNF and won a seat at the 1974 election. (He had not been nominated by the Government to the Council). A further factor in some cases is a genuine conservative worry about the pace of change, particularly as it affects the traditional system.

Chiefs illustrate this. The Minister of Local Government & Lands stated:

I do not see what there is for the Chiefs to complain about because the Government have already committed themselves in this country to protecting chieftainship.

.
 . . . Chiefs and all the people of Botswana should realise that we have taken a step forward. We are no longer separate tribes under separate Chiefs, but a nation. When we accepted Independence, we chose a Republican Constitution, and when that Constitution was made we knew that meant giving representatives of the people more power and not an individual. . . . The foundation of our Constitution is democratic and that means the people have a say in the affairs of the country.¹

The culmination of the clash of views between the Government and the House of Chiefs however came in a major statement² made by the President warning the Chiefs to keep out of party politics. It included the following passage:

As Members of the House of Chiefs, you have an important role to play in the development of this country and its people, and it always pleases Government to learn that some of you are striving hard to achieve this great goal, which we, the people of Botswana, have set ourselves.

It is unfortunate and, indeed, regrettable, that this cannot be said of all of you.³

The reaction of the Chiefs was to pass a motion, proposed by Chief Bathoeni:

That this Honourable House view with concern the remarks made to it in November, 1968, by His Excellency the President, on the subject of Chiefs' participation in politics.⁴

The suspicious attitude adopted by the Paramount Chiefs resulted not only from Ministerial speeches about democratisation but also from the transfer of certain powers away from the Chiefs. It did not matter

1 House of Chiefs, Official Report, Eighth Meeting, p. 20 (12 DEC 67)

2 Reproduced in full in Appendix "J"

3 House of Chiefs, Official Report, Tenth Meeting, p. 4 (25 NOV 68)

4 House of Chiefs, Minutes of the Eleventh Meeting, p. 4 (19 FEB 69)

greatly to them - however germane it may be to this study - whether the powers they lost were given to elected or nominated bodies,¹ but the ambiguities of the position of the "non-political" hereditary ruler as Chairman of a District Council,² and the nature of the District Commissioner's relationship with the Council and the traditional administration³ were probed by the Chiefs, albeit with indifferent success. The bitterness felt by the Chiefs was epitomised by Chief Bathoen when he remarked:

The Government does not want to say explicitly that chieftainship has come to an end. What is being done now is to have a Chief just as a nominal figure. There is only one Proclamation left now for the Government to make, and that is about kgotla cases [i.e. Chiefs' judicial functions]. After that the next Proclamation will be the last one.

It is clear then that the Paramount Chiefs were unhappy about their new role, despite their initial ex officio position as Council Chairmen in most Districts and their continuing position as ex officio members of Councils. Indeed it was his experience of the new system that finally precipitated Bathoen's decision to resign and seek election to Parliament, successfully, on the BNF ticket. The attitude of the lower ranks of the traditional administration is much less easy to summarise. A general lack of trust is widely reported between District Councillors and Headmen: hardly a conference (of either or both groups) passed without a fairly standard call for "more explanation" of the respective roles to correct the "misunderstandings" which exist. The language used here is in part to be taken literally, but in many instances is a

1 See Proctor, op. cit., for a good summary of the Chiefs' rearguard action.

2 Motion by Mr. L. T. Khama [of the Bangwato], House of Chiefs, Official Record, Ninth Meeting, p. 5 (22 JUL 68)

3 Questions by Chief Bathoen, ibid., Seventh Meeting, pp. 2-4 (24 JUL 67)

4 Ibid., Eighth Meeting, p. 17 (11 DEC 67)

kgotla-style euphemistic admission of the persistence of friction between the elected and hereditary elements at the village level.

In particular situations, however, wide variations occur in the degree of integration of individuals in the two spheres - Holm's syncretistic model.¹ Some sub-Chiefs or Headmen were simultaneously also MPs or District Councillors (the President's warning notwithstanding²), or VDC officebearers, and some have stood for election on Opposition platforms, including that of the BNF which aims to give a new lease of life to bogosi (chieftainship). Others have distanced themselves as far as possible from the new-fangled elected systems, distrusting all politicians.

There are still arguably two trump cards up the sleeves of the traditional authorities. One is the undisputed role of the Chief or Headman in officially convening kgotla meetings: as the (then) Chief of the Bakwena remarked:

. . . even if the Government would take away all the powers from Chiefs, it will have a difficulty in working with the people, because they still want to get their information through their Chief. They still accept whole-heartedly what they are told by their Chiefs, which does not make it quite clear how the Government thinks they can take away the powers of the Chiefs and have them themselves.³

The other is more debatable and refers to the key relationship between clan membership and land.⁴ So long as membership of a clan is a prerequisite for the use of land over most of the country and the Paramount Chief of the clan symbolises that relationship, it is difficult to see how the position of Chief could be abolished. The judicial

1 J. D. Holm, Dimensions of Mass Involvement in Botswana Politics (1974)

2 See Appendix "J"

3 House of Chiefs, Official Report, Eighth Meeting, p. 18 (11 DEC 67)

4 See BDN, 29 JUN 76, for a discussion of the problem of "landless" clans.

function of Chiefs, by contrast, could be transferred to Customary Magistrates if plans made long ago in the Attorney General's Department were implemented. Although it has just been argued that public attachment to the institution of bogosi is the main factor restraining the Government from further eroding it, this does not mean that this attachment has been unaffected by the changes occurring over the past twelve years; quite the reverse is the case. This can be seen most clearly in the dramatic drop in the population of the clan capitals, a process which has come in for recent study.¹ In part this is due, it is true, to the drift to the towns - especially the new capital, Gaborone,² and the brand-new mining town of Selebi-Phikwe - but it is also evident that the well-known phenomenon of the phaladi (scattering) from the village to the arable fields ("Lands") is acquiring momentum and permanency. As Silitshena puts it,

It has been argued that the main reason why some people are abandoning the traditional towns is because they want to be near their lands; and that this movement has been stimulated by two factors, the provision of water and social facilities at the lands areas, and the curbing of the powers of the Chiefs by the modern government of Botswana.³

It will be noted that both factors mentioned by Silitshena are a direct result of the Local Government reforms of 1965/66.

Since the process of migration operates at the level of the smaller villages too, it has implications for the efficacy of Village Development Committees, as has been noted.⁴

1 See in particular the pioneering work of R. M. K. Silitshena, notably in his Conceptual Framework for the study of rural-rural migration in Botswana (1977)

2 Only since independence has there been a national capital within the country: previously the capital, Mafeking, was in alien territory. See N. Mitchison, Return to the Fairy Hill (1966) pp. 34-36 for an evocative description of the treatment given to eminent Batswana in "their" capital before independence.

3 R. M. K. Silitshena, op. cit., p. 19

4 In Chapter 6, passim.

An important question therefore for rural Botswana is whether the problems of authority could be resolved by the wholesale introduction of an elected chieftainship. It is far from clear in principle that, for most Batswana, more legitimacy in this context attaches to elected institutions than to hereditary ones; moreover in practice, despite some official dismay, most candidates for elections for the position of Headmen have been drawn from the aristocracy.¹

This attitude is not really surprising, given the colonial experience of indirect rule, whereby neither type of administration was removable by the will of the people. Colonialism, after all, is a poor nursery for democracy.

SCOPE AND EFFICACY

Efficiency

Reference has been made to the Councils as forums for the airing of problems arising in the districts. The question to be discussed here is the efficiency of the system in dealing with the remit of Councils. Several issues are involved here. One is the practical question of administrative efficiency. In the early days of the operation of the system two factors militated against efficiency. In the first place the bulk of the Council staff had been inherited from the old traditional administration and were, initially at least, somewhat at sea in their new roles; gradually a number of the older staff were retired or superseded. Moreover there was little incentive to self-betterment when the career opportunities were restricted to the one (often very small) Council office. The other, related, factor was the low priority given to local government by the central Government; in

1 For debate on the subject amongst the Barolong see BDN, 15 OCT 71, 20 OCT 71, 29 FEB 72.

particular the Ministry of Finance had a low opinion of the capacity of Councils and therefore - a self-fulfilling prophecy - were reluctant to see funds transferred to the Councils. The problem was compounded by the lower rates of pay due to local government officers compared with their civil service counterparts. Both of these factors have substantially altered as the result of, first, the introduction of the Unified Local Government Service, providing a national career structure for local government officers (even if the issue of parity of salaries and conditions with the civil service has not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of local government employees);¹ and, second, the stress on rural development which has come increasingly to be both emphasised and institutionalised in Botswana in the 1970s. Both sets of changes have undoubtedly increased the administrative capacity of the Councils, but at the expense of their autonomy.

That there was ample room for improvement in efficiency is made plain by the Auditors' reports² on the three Councils studied. Detailed criticisms in particular of tax collection, rent collection, trade licences, water fees and stores were made concerning the first five years of the Councils' existence, but in each case the reports included this section:

SURCHARGE

Regulation 94 of Legal Notice No. 37 of 1966 provides, amongst other things, for a surcharge to be levied on Council officials in respect of losses arising from their wilful, negligent or wrongful acts. During the course of our audit, irregularities were disclosed which are referred to in detail elsewhere in this report. In our opinion,

1 BDN, 1 OCT 74

2 Owing to staff shortages, the Ministry of Local Government & Lands called in outside auditors, Messrs. Price Waterhouse & Co./John Knipe & Co.. Their reports (and detailed supplementary reports) to the Minister are referred to hereinafter as "Price Waterhouse, Report . . ." etc.

however, the imposition of surcharges would be inappropriate in respect of the period under review, because the irregularities to which we refer can be attributed in the main to the relative inexperience of the Council officials.¹

Although cases of embezzlement, mainly by revenue collectors, of smallish sums of money occurred, it must be recorded that the universal view that local government in Botswana was free of corruption is borne out by all the available evidence.² In general the problem was not a lack of honesty but a lack of training and experience.

Where the Councils' record was weakest was in the sphere where the institution came into contact with the public. Thus matimela collection turned out to be very costly to administer,³ tax collection in many areas was patchy, and Ipelegeng also had a very mixed record. One obvious explanation is that the people were accustomed to the authority of the Chief/Headman in these matters and did not readily take to the new official channels. Councillors were particularly criticised by the Government - and rightly so - for failing to take an interest in tax collection. Councillors obviously decided that there was no attraction in getting involved in the matter and did not perceive a connexion with the amount of resources (and the degree of autonomy) accruing to their Council.

The administrative efficiency of Councils is only half of the picture. The other half is the efficacy of the particular type of local government wherein elected Councillors, through a committee system

1 Price Waterhouse, Supplementary Reports: on North East District Council 1966-71, p. 45; on the Southern District Council 1966-71, p. 76; on the Central District Council 1966-70, p. 77.

2 This was confirmed in an interview by the Senior Local Government Auditor. But some Southern District Councillors were threatened with court action for the collection of arrears of local government tax (BDN, 16 MAY 75).

3 One explanation adduced was that the real costs, and benefits, of the system as run by the traditional administration had been concealed.

as well as full Council meetings, perform executive as well as deliberative functions; without them the system would be simply decentralised administration.

Councillors as decision-makers

Councillors laboured under a number of difficulties at the beginning. One was simply the problem of understanding the system, and the early minutes abound in references to the difficulty of defining the respective roles of the traditional authorities (from the main kgotlas to village Headmen) and the Councillors. The position was not helped by the Government's extreme tardiness in making available to all Councillors Setswana copies of the official Handbook. Language was indeed a second and formidable barrier - language in the sense not only of facility in reading English, the language of reports, but in understanding the unfamiliar bureaucratese jargon in which so many documents were couched. It is small wonder therefore that most Councillors started off by treating Council meetings like kgotla meetings, expecting verbal explanations of anything important and being more concerned in debate with making a contribution than with reaching a firm, operational decision. It took several years before something akin to professionalism emerged among Councillors as they realised that they had a managerial role to perform and not just an advisory function. This growing competence was however matched by the growing complexity and bureaucratisation of Council affairs (discussed below).

The importance attached to debating helps to explain the relatively ad hoc approach to the allocation of resources, although another explanation must be Councillors' failure to perceive their political future as being tied up with the ability to "deliver the goods" to their constituents. It might be argued that this is because there

were so few resources to allocate, and the argument has some force. But for instance Councillors' failure to nominate candidates for destitutes' allowances indicates that it is more than that. Any evidence for the idea that Councillors corruptly influenced the selection of casual labour, the award of school bursaries, or the granting of trading licences certainly is lacking in the three Councils selected for study.¹ In general the "objective" (technocratic) criteria used by officials in drawing up recommended priority lists were very infrequently challenged, and where alteration did occur it was the result of the eloquent pleading of a good case rather than any previously arranged deal. Certainly in the few instances where Councillors appeared to be arguing for their own private interests the reaction from their colleagues was openly critical.

Scope

Lest the picture painted of District politics be too idyllic, it must be pointed out that the key resource in rural Botswana is land-with-water; thus ownership of a borehole confers the tangible benefit of exclusive use of land for grazing cattle, and this power is wielded by the Land Boards (and in the larger Districts, Subordinate Land Boards). It has already been noted that MPs and Councillors have been very critical on occasion of the Land Boards, alleging corruption, inefficiency and unnecessary expenses.

The Government's decision to confer the power to allocate land not on the Councils per se but upon the hybrid Land Boards, consisting of ministerial nominees and representatives of both the District Councils and the Chiefs, conferred influence on those Councillors who sat on the

¹ Hawkers' licences were not uncommonly refused where these conflicted with existing trade licences but this was a general pattern rather than a precise reflection of individual Councillors' interests.

Boards rather than on the Councils, which could discuss the general policy of Land Boards but could not alter their decisions in detail. The position of Councillors on the Subordinate Land Boards is even stronger and indeed has given the Councillors concerned a powerful position locally.

Councils' relations with the District Development Committees are a parallel case, in the sense that the Government again decided against conferring the key district planning function on Councils. Instead a symbiotic relationship has developed between Council and DDC, each commenting on the other's plans - which increases the scope of the Council's influence but at the price of having to submit its own plans to the DDC for scrutiny. In day to day terms the effect of the DDC system has been to permit Councils to exert pressure on hitherto autonomous Government departments "in the field", with some success, to deal with urgent problems.

A similar ambiguity attended the "one-off" Accelerated Rural Development Programme. On the one hand the ARDP can be seen as making nonsense of Councils' elaborately drawn up development plans. But insofar as Councils were made the implementing agencies, wherever possible, the calculations by the "pro-District" lobby in the central Government Ministries was that the result would be a permanent increase in the capacity of Councils for development activity and that they would tend to attract further development grants thereby.

Finally reference must be made to the Government's far-reaching proposals for a national policy on communal grazing land.¹ This move came after the period studied, and at the time of writing the implications were unclear, but it looks as if the proposed new system will bypass the District Councils as such.

1 Government Paper No 2 of 1975: National policy on Tribal grazing land

BUREAUCRATISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The lack of familiarity with administrative procedure by Councillors meant that the Council Secretaries as chief executives were in a strong position. This was seen with particular clarity in the Central District where the Council Secretary, who had the additional advantage of an aristocratic pedigree and a personal relationship with the President, dominated Councillors, in the first few years, until he came gradually under increasing challenge as Councillors grew wise to the system. The importance of personality as a factor is brought out by the contrast with the other two Councils, where the first Secretary in each case lacked the personal impact of L. M. Seretse, and it was only later, with the advent of new Secretaries, that the full potential of the position was used. But by that time Councillors had become more self-confident within the system and thus in the Second Session in all three cases there were periodic, if restrained, clashes. An example of the difficulties encountered by Councillors in asserting their control was the case of the Education Secretary in the Central District, who survived protracted criticism thanks in part to the support he was given by the Council Secretary. In the Southern District, by contrast, a competent and energetic Councillor who was elected Chairman of the Education Committee worked out a good relationship with the Education Secretary and as a result the Education Committee there was a model of a successful partnership between elected members and officials.

The appointment of young expatriate volunteers as Council Advisers had a definite effect on the balance between the two sides, rather more markedly so than the official powers conferred upon District Commissioners, although in the North East the latter played an important part in a number of decisions. District Commissioners however had many matters to

deal with, whereas the Council Advisers' full attention was given to "improving" the Councils, and most of them epitomized the overseas volunteer - keen, dedicated and hardworking (even if inexperienced and initially inevitably ignorant of Botswana). The Council Advisers affected procedure and general administrative questions, but their main impact was on the allocation of resources. For this the Government's growing stress on planning was in large measure responsible. Someone had to draw up development plans, often at short notice, just as someone had to draw up project memoranda. Owing to the acute shortage of qualified manpower at all levels of Government - a problem with far-reaching effects on the whole political system - these jobs were usually given to the Council Advisers, assisted in time by other young expatriates in posts such as Works Superintendents or Water Advisers, until the planning function came to be transferred largely to the District Development Committees - where another expatriate volunteer was usually the District Officer (Development) and as such full-time Secretary to the DDC.

One factor reducing the influence of individual volunteer advisers (if not necessarily of the volunteer cadre) was the relatively short length of their appointment (and this was very often true of the District Commissioner and his subordinates, who were subject to frequent transfers). As a result the permanent staff, notably the Council Secretary, were apparently in a stronger position in the long run. But this was altered in 1973 by the Government's introduction of the ULGS, as a result of which Council Secretaries found themselves in the same position as their opposite numbers across town in the District Administration, transferred at short notice to other parts of the Republic. Thus the ULGS had the paradoxical effect of strengthening the position of elected Councillors vis-à-vis the Council officials¹ but weakening the

¹ That is to say, in terms of influence. In formal terms Councillors had collectively lost the power of appointment over (salaried) officials in the Councils' employ.

influence of Councils at the centre where the Council Secretary was an effective advocate on behalf of his Council.

As new institutions were set up at the District level the inevitable effect was to increase the bureaucratisation of planning and resource allocation and the role of non-elected people generally. At the village level, however, at first sight it might be thought that the push to create Village Development Committees was a move in the opposite direction; and so it was, just as the establishment of District Councils had given the power to the people for the first time to select their local rulers. When one refers to bureaucratisation in the context of VDCs it is a different phenomenon, less the result of deliberate Government policy and more a tendency which was not universal because not inevitable. Within the VDC some Community Development Assistants were observed to play a leading role but this was not a general norm. The bureaucratisation occurred more in the communication flow between the village (especially the VDC) and the District headquarters, being increasingly dominated by direct correspondence between the VDC and the Council Staff, reinforced by ^{the} growing number of visits paid by Council employees (and also District Officers [Development]) to villages. The incorporation of Community Development field staff into the Council staff¹ was a further manifestation of the tendency.

Nevertheless active politicians, of village, district or national levels, have been able to assert leadership of VDCs - almost always in the village of their own residence - and in some cases have acted as middlemen.² It would still be possible for more middlemen to emerge even if they have to swim against the tide of bureaucratisation.

1 This transfer of Community Development staff was of course a genuine strengthening of the Councils.

2 An interesting example from the Central District is given in a recent article. R. P. Werbner, "Small man Politics and the Rule of Law: centre-periphery relations in East-Central Botswana," Journal of African Law, XXI, 1 (1977).

At the national level Gunderson's description of Botswana as an "administrative state"¹ is persuasive, if oversimplified. Botswana has become a planner's paradise and the increasing sophistication of the planning machine makes it difficult for politicians to control and direct the future course of events. It is neatly symbolic that the central Ministries are airconditioned: the expatriate in the civil service worked better when protected from the environment. The question of bureaucratic domination is complicated by and intertwined with the question of expatriates. The task of localisation of the civil service has been a difficult one but yet politically urgent. An indication of both is provided by the exhaustive Localisation Report² produced in 1973 which included the following table:³

TABLE 10.3

PROGRESS IN LOCALISATION 1972
MIDDLE AND SENIOR GRADE POSTS BY CADRE

<u>Classes of Posts</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Locals</u>	<u>Expatriate</u>	<u>Vacancies</u>
Superscale	110	37	53	20
Administrative	65	28	14	23
Professional	203	30	108	65
Executive	406	305	25	76
Technical	454	128	167	159
Secretarial	30	7	20	3
P. Scale - Police	95	61	11	23
P. Scale - Prisons	18	18	-	-
Teaching Scale (Hutton)	62	1	33	28
Teaching Scale (Okoh)	134	28	106	-
N. Scale - Nursing Staff	43	39	1	3
<u>Totals</u>	<u>1620</u>	<u>682</u>	<u>538</u>	<u>400</u>

1 G. L. Gunderson, "Nation-building and the Administrative State: the case of Botswana" (1970)

2 Report of the Presidential Commission on Localisation and Training in the Botswana Civil Service and the Government Statement on the Report of the Commission (1973) [colloquially referred to in civil servant circles as the "Glynn Report," from the Ford Foundation Staff Development Consultant who was a leading member of the Commission].

3 Ibid., Appendix 2

The Table underestimates the number of expatriates¹ in influential positions, since those who were appointed to supernumerary posts did not count in the establishment figure.

Gunderson regarded the presence of expatriates as proof of continuing British neo-colonial influence. He went further and claimed:

British influence is aimed at constructing within Botswana a polity which is willing to co-exist with South Africa. Britain cannot allow a militant anti-apartheid indigenous element to gain control of Botswana even by a constitutional election. . . . Great Britain has attempted to preserve her ultimate control over Botswana's domestic and foreign policies.²

The implication that Seretse Khama, of all people, is "soft on apartheid," which was improbable anyway, has proved false in recent years. The more serious misunderstanding concerns the nature of the expatriate influence, which has changed markedly in quality since Gunderson's study was completed. Botswana's policy in the sphere of recruitment, as indeed in foreign policy, has been the diversification of contacts, so that nowadays American, Canadian, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, German, Korean, Filipino and many other nationalities are represented in personnel working in Botswana, not to mention the important contribution made by United Nations agencies. Some of the most influential personnel, nevertheless, have been UK citizens, but supplied not only by the British Government but by quasi-independent agencies like the Ford and Ariel Foundation.³

1 The latest unofficial estimate is around 800 expatriates in the public sector. Official figures are due to be revealed shortly when the latest report of the Localisation Commission is published. In addition somewhat less than 200 Europeans have naturalised since Independence and naturally they are counted as locals. Some are senior civil servants, but by no means all. For a BPP attack on the influence of white citizens in the civil service see BDN, 23 AUG 77.

2 Gunderson, op. cit., p. 398

3 The latter, like the German equivalent, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, has supplied aid to the ruling Democratic Party. The party manifestoes, like the President's foreign policy speeches, are examples of the work of such experts.

The importance of expatriate personnel,¹ many of them liberal/radical intellectuals, cannot be gainsaid. Their presence has the effect of obscuring the eventual shape of politics in Botswana, but at the same time some of their ideas have already been institutionalised and will thus exert a continuing influence.

Development

In this study the term "development" has been applied, as in the Government's rhetoric, to mean physical and economic change: in particular the improvement of infrastructure and services. After the hesitant beginnings of the local government system, when its main function was to replace the administration of the Chiefs, the Government has laid increasing stress on District Councils' developmental function. As early as 1967 the Minister of Local Government & Lands (by then Mr. Kgabo) was beginning to emphasise this role.² By the same token Councils were judged to be failing in their responsibilities and this feeling, strong in the Government Mall in Gaborone, where Councils in general were held in scant respect,³ led to the appointment of Council Advisers,⁴ the enhancement of the District Commissioner's role, and above all the appointment of the Tordoff Committee and the subsequent implementation of its recommendations to set up the District Development Committee

1 It is an apt semantic point that most Batswana fail to distinguish between the pronunciation of "expat" and "expert".

2 See Republic of Botswana, Ministry of Local Government & Lands, Annual Report for the Year 1967, p. 1

3 Wass reports an unnamed Permanent Secretary as stating: "In my view the machinery of local government is too democratic and there is not sufficient direct intervention by central government." (Wass, op. cit., pp. 321-322).

4 In one District where the Council was sitting on substantial inherited reserves one of the tasks tackled by the new appointee was that of getting Council committees to embark on a spending programme to use these funds for development. The resentment expressed by the Treasurer was a mark of the former's success. (See p. 184 above.)

¹ structure. As has been noted, the DDCs and the crash Accelerated Rural Development Programme were at the same time recognitions of the need to involve District Councils in development and expressions of a lack of confidence in their capacity to undertake it without supervision.

A genuine dilemma concerns the really major developmental problems of Botswana. Above all there is the precarious nature of agriculture. Drought is endemic in the area, and at its worst can kill off half the cattle in the country and leave a third of the people starving. In good years these problems can be shelved; in catastrophic years they make efforts to improve schools, roads and clinics look puny and almost irrelevant to the pressing necessities of life.² Hence the World Food Programme,³ which has come to Botswana's rescue several times, could dictate conditions of acceptance of aid - the Food-for-Work idea - which had serious implications for the Government's cherished principle of "self-reliance". An extract from a national conference, on Self Help and Village Development, brings out the point plainly:

A suggestion by the World Food Programme Project Officer, Mr. Jobber, that WFP would in certain circumstances be prepared to provide a food contribution toward VDC projects was discussed at length. Fears were expressed that such a measure would tend to undermine the self-help spirit and it would be impossible to distinguish in the public mind from a return to Food-for-Work. The factor was also mentioned that WFP could give no long-term guarantee of the continuation of this type of aid, whereas its withdrawal once established would have a serious effect on all future attempts to institute a genuine self-help development

1 It is interesting to note the influence of the experience of countries to the North, commencing with the use of the Malaŵi Local Government Law as the basis for the Botswana Legislation, to the Tordoff Committee's recommendations to try the Zambia/Tanzanian models.

2 For a vivid, indeed poignant, account of the difficulties encountered in one scheme, to introduce fruit trees (linked with primary schools), see J. Flood, Reports on Development Projects Supported by Botswana Christian Council (1974) pp. 272-276

3 A good idea of the problems inherent in the Drought Relief and related programmes can be derived from World Food Programme, Botswana, Project 995 (Drought Relief), Quarterly Progress Reports.

programme. It was therefore RESOLVED that because of the difficulties outlined above no programme of food aid should be linked with the VDC system and the self-help programme. Conference was in favour of a food programme to relieve the genuinely destitute; Mr. Jobber stated, however, that WFP could not provide food on these terms. . . .¹

Thus major decisions on development priorities and strategies have been imposed on the Government as much as on the Councils by external influences. The latest instance is the Government's reluctant decision to divert funds to build up a small Defence Force to counter the recent raids across the border by the armed forces of the Smith régime;² the money to pay for this comes partly at the expense of the national development programme.

At the Council level the impact of aid agencies - a welcome alternative to the central government as a source of funds - affected the type of projects selected and the need for other criteria to be met,³ not least the requirement of a "local contribution". In an extreme case, differences of opinion between the officer responsible for aid channelled through the Christian Council and the North East District Council Secretary led to the suspension of aid to that Council.⁴ In sum, the amount of discretion left to Councillors in the selection of development projects and priorities was severely limited.

An important question to be determined is the impact on development of democratic institutions at the grassroots. The optimistic model envisages popular village level choice of projects, as much as personnel, which are next referred (via the elected Councillor) to the Council for

1 Minutes of the First National Conference of DDCs, Gaborone, 4-7 DEC 72 p. 3.

2 Foreseen as long ago as 1969. See J. E. Spence, "The Implication of the Rhodesia Issue for the Former High Commission Territories," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, VII, No.2 (July 1969)

3 See Appendix "B" for one example

4 See Flood, op. cit., p. 241; and p. 244 above.

decision, and then implemented by the same people who chose the project in the first place. (Equally if a project were turned down this would be accepted if the reasons were explained.) The reality is, not surprisingly, much less clear cut than this ideal model would suggest. The two major reasons why mobilisation has been disappointing are firstly, the confusion in the public mind over Food-for-Work and Self-Help projects, both referred to popularly as Ipelegeng,¹ and the frequent changes in the policies, personnel and procedures with which villages have had to deal. Here much can be done by Community Development Assistants and Councillors (as was demonstrated in a number of villages) but a crucial constraint is the physical problem of communication.

The second reason is that the waning authority of the Headman has not been replaced by the Village Development Committees, which as voluntary bodies, have to rely on the persuasive power of the kgotla ideal. The fact that sanctions cannot now legally be enforced by Headmen has sunk in rather more generally than the idea of village self-determination or self-government. Given the Government's commitment to democratising the traditional system, it would appear that the only alternative to a continued reliance on exhortation is the conferral of limited powers of compulsion on elected village councils. Even this solution would run the risk of widespread evasion as people migrate away from the central kgotlas.

THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: SOME SPECULATIONS

The Problem

In the aftermath of the 1974 elections, a nagging worry affected some members of the Democratic Party Government. The problem was not the

1 The source of confusion can be traced back to official ambiguities as long ago as 1966. See Wass, op. cit., esp. pp. 210-211 and 215-216; and p. 39 above.

Opposition, which lost ground everywhere in 1974; the problem lies with the people of Botswana. It is reassuring for the Government to know that the "Five National Principles" are accepted by virtually everyone, including the three Opposition parties, and that stability seems to be assured as the BDP - with or without Sir Seretse - looks like continuing to be the ruling party for the foreseeable future. But increasingly apathy has come to predominate and participation in public affairs has dropped to a low level. Deference to the "Government" prevails, but does not necessarily lead to positive participation, far less mobilisation for development. The crisis is seen clearly in local government, which is in a way the Achilles' heel of Botswana's democracy.

The Trend

The decision to pack the Councils in 1969 can be seen with hindsight to have been an important step, negating the popular will in two cases in practice and potentially everywhere, and carried a logical step further by interference with one or two VDCs.¹ The result is to force Opposition parties into a literally irresponsible position in local government.

In addition to interference with the local political process, the Government has, as has been noted, increasingly resorted to non-elected bodies to tackle problems at the district level, even if some elected Councillors sit on these bodies.

If further developments along these lines are to be contemplated in an attempt to achieve greater mobilisation, the only possibilities remaining are the strengthening of the staff and technical capacity of the District Councils and giving them more influence with, or control over, the other and newer district-level institutions. This would help to restore some meaning to the electoral process.

1 Apart from the Palapye case mentioned earlier, two cases from the North West have been reported where the District Commissioner intervened, BDN, 1 MAY 74 and 16 JAN 75.

One reason why the Government hesitates to confer a greater degree of popular control over developmental matters, and resources in general, is the conviction that Botswana is entering a testing period in which certain hard and unpalatable decisions have to be taken, since the pressure of population on a fragile ecology makes delay in tackling problems irresponsible.

Political Alternatives

It is partly this consideration which makes the possibility of a one-party state sound attractive to some BDP members. The siren voices of UNIP¹ (and to a lesser extent TANU), who as fraternal parties send delegates to the BDP annual conference, exert some influence, stressing as they have done the threat to "nation-building" of "particularist" opposition parties. Another advocate of turning Botswana into a one party state has been an American political scientist, Dr. Richard Vengroff,² who argues in a peculiar logic from the weakness of the BDP that it deserves to be strengthened by an official identification with the state and hence transformed, Cinderella-like, into a mobilising agency. The possibility was mentioned but implicitly ruled out by other foreign experts, Tordoff and Sarpong³ and Chambers and Feldman.⁴ Still, despite the explicit rejection of the idea by the President,⁵ the idea continues to exert a certain fascination in some BDP circles, probably born of a romanticised idea of what has been happening in Tanzania and

1 See Speech by Hon A. J. Soko, M.P., Minister of Trade and Industry [of Zambia (UNIP delegate)], at the annual conference of the Botswana Democratic Party held in Francistown from 1st to 3rd April 1972 (mimeo), especially p. 2.

2 R. Vengroff, "Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana," (1972), particularly Abstract, third page.

3 Tordoff, Pilane & Sarpong, Report of the Local Government Study Group (1970), p. 59.

4 Chambers & Feldman, Report on Rural Development (1973), pp. 180-185

5 E.g. in an important interview prior to the 1974 General Election, BDN, 23 AUG 74.

Zambia. The debate within the BDP about its future centres around the choice between being the Democratic Party or the Development Party.

This assumes that a choice has to be made between the two. This is not necessarily the case. Instead an alternative strategy could be employed which would resolve to revive the democratic ideal behind local government. It would entail an end to the addition of any non-elected voting members to Councils, and a similar self-denying policy with respect to VDCs. Moreover the already visible transfer of resources and capacity to the districts could be placed at the disposal of the elected Councils, which could be allowed more autonomy in general; there could remain ample safeguards, through inspection and audit, against corruption or abuse of office. At the village level, where the problem of popular participation is marked, a more difficult reform could be attempted in the form of a statutory framework for elected village or community councils, possibly synchronised on a district or national basis.

The advantages of this alternative approach to reform is that it would allow for the emergence of a new generation of political leaders, drawn largely from the younger, educated people and especially women, who are barely represented at any level at present. A portent of the potential for participation and the feasibility of this strategy is the interest shown by both the public and the Government¹ in the mass education campaign conducted on the National Development Plan.²

Were such a plan carried out it would throw an onus not only on the ruling party but also on opposition parties, existing or future, to produce programmes and justify their record to the electorate at every level.

1 Especially the Vice-President, who is also Minister of Finance & Development Planning.

2 A notable feature of which was the majority of women leaders of the Radio Listening Groups. See M. Colclough, An Analysis of Participant Feedback (forthcoming) (Vol. III of Colclough & Crowley, The People and the Plan),

In conclusion, it is argued that Local Government as an institution is facing a crossroads. Unless steps are taken to strengthen the role of elections and elected Councils, one casualty of change in Botswana may be the Local Government ideal.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX AMINISTERIAL BROADCAST BY THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LANDSMONDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 1969

Today's Daily News announces decisions which will influence our progress towards an effective local government system throughout the country. These concern the nominations which the President is empowered to make to augment the elected membership of the District and Town Councils. Full details of these nominations are given in the Daily News.

The purpose of these nominations is to give Councils the benefit of the experience and ability of citizens who for one reason or another have not been elected, or have not sought election. Government has in order to strengthen a number of Councils decided to appoint more nominated Councillors than were appointed in 1966. In most cases these extra nominations do not affect the control of the Council. In two cases they do. I refer to Francistown and the North East District Council. I feel that the Government's decision in these two cases does require some explanation.

The BDP's Election Manifesto has been endorsed by the people of Botswana. It is now the policy of our elected Government. In it the BDP pledged itself to a programme of resettlement in the rural areas taken over from the Tati Company. Another commitment of crucial importance is the BDP's pledge to make a fresh start with the development of Francistown as a healthy, balanced, properly planned, non-racial community.

For some time it has been clear that the problem of the Tati Company was not simply a local issue, but a national one. The land we purchased from the Tati Company was paid for from development funds. Our purpose in taking it over was to release undeveloped land and natural resources for productive activity to be undertaken by Government and by private enterprise on an orderly basis.

Furthermore, as we explained in our Manifesto, and as the President explained in his Francistown Speech in September, the acquisition of land would not by itself solve the economic and social problems of the area. But we do now have the opportunity to tackle these problems. This opportunity can only be grasped if the Councils in the area are manned by able and dedicated councillors who are determined to implement the policy which has been endorsed by the people of Botswana as a whole. For it is the resources of the nation as a whole which have been and will be devoted to making a new start in the Tati Area.

Thus your BDP Government could not allow the wishes of the people to be frustrated by a situation which would allow control of both the Francistown and North East Councils to be determined by a mere toss of a coin. This is how the Mayor of Francistown and the Chairman of the North East District Council would be selected, if the number of BDP nominated councillors are not increased.

Rather than leave the future of this important area to the toss of a coin, the Government recognises a clear duty to achieve its development

objectives in the interests of Botswana as a whole. This means that we must prevent a situation arising in which the Francistown Town Council and the North East District Council are controlled by a Party whose representatives have shown themselves barren of constructive proposals for improving our future.

Above all the development of Francistown which will, with the mining development, become our largest urban centre the nation as a whole would suffer [sic]. For all these reasons the BDP Government has decided to nominate enough councillors to ensure that we have, both in Francistown and the North East, Councils which will work for the planned development of their respective areas.

It is, of course, regrettable that we have been obliged to make a decision which falls short of the ideals we have set ourselves to achieve in promoting local democracy. The choice of councillors made by voters in one area clashes with the expressed desire of the nation as a whole. In such a situation the national interest must prevail, and powers which are provided for by law, duly exercised.

But the wishes of the local people will not be ignored. We recognise that the developments which the BDP is planning for Francistown and the Tati can only be achieved on a basis of consent. We are not going to violate the President's dictum that "development is not achieved by pushing people in directions they do not wish to go, for reasons they do not understand". All elected councillors will have every opportunity to express their views in a constructive manner, and the BDP Councillors, whether elected or nominated, will concern themselves continuously with local needs and the wishes of the people on the spot.

The other important announcement to which I wish to draw your attention concerns the Chairmanship of District Councils. In the past in a number of Councils, chiefs have been ex-officio Chairman. That is to say chiefs have occupied the position of Chairman, simply because they were chiefs. In future this will not necessarily be the case. All Councils will from henceforth have the opportunity of electing their own Chairman. This does not mean that Chiefs will be excluded from the Councils. Far from it. We recognise that traditional authority has still an important contribution to make to our development and social cohesion. Chiefs will continue to be ex-officio members of District Councils.

Nor will chiefs necessarily be excluded from the Chairmanship. A number of Chiefs who have shown responsibility and leadership capacity will certainly be elected as Council Chairmen by the new majorities. In other cases a Chief may not wish to assume, or may not be qualified to assume, the Chairman's role. Again there are cases where the Council Area embraces more than one tribal group and hence more than one Chief. This is true of the South East District Council and of the Ngwaketse-Barolong District. Faced with this situation Government has decided to permit the majority groups in all District Councils to elect their own Chairmen.

They will thus be able to express their confidence in a Chief as Chairman where such confidence is justified. Where it is not, they will be free to withhold their endorsement and select a suitable Chairman from among their number.

This change is a development which follows naturally from the first successful phase in the introduction of democratic local government in Botswana. It is in conformity with the pledge contained in the BDP Manifesto to examine the role of traditional authority, in order to devise a system more compatible with popular aspirations and the demands of good government. We must now work to resolve other problems, and in particular seek ways of rationalising the present wasteful duplication which still exists in certain areas between District Councils and the surviving remnants of the traditional administration.

This decision on Council Chairmen is one more step towards the achievement of a fully representative system of local government, geared to Botswana's urgent development priorities. This BDP Government will also, as promised in its Manifesto, redouble its efforts to promote participatory democracy at grass roots level. The role of Village Development Committees and other agencies of participation and social and economic progress will become increasingly important.

Finally, the BDP Government will fulfil its promise to review progress in local government and to examine central-local government relations so as to improve efficiency, increase local participation, and further promote development.

I hope I have said enough to you tonight to reassure you that these decisions have not been made out of any spirit of personal or political vindictiveness on the part of the governing party. Rather our reasons for taking these actions stem from a concern to see that our efforts as a Government and your own efforts as a people to build Botswana are not in any way unnecessarily frustrated.

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

To: Director, School Partnership Programme

From: District/Town Council Secretary to be Responsible
for Project Name

Address

Through: (Name of Village Development
Committee)

1. NATURE OF PROJECT: Classrooms Other (specify)

2. COMMUNITY

A Name

B Population

C District, Republic of Botswana

D Major Source of Income

3. SCHOOL

A. Operated by: District Council
Other (specify)

B. Support requested from SPP Rand (US Dollars)

C. Total cost of project including village contribution but
excluding labour cost Rand (US Dollars)

D. Construction target dates: Start Completion

E. Number of Classrooms (or other) to be built For Standards
(Grades)

F. Number of students last year: When completed

G. Standards (Grades) taught

H. Ages of students to

I. Number of classrooms at present

J. Number of classes

K. Number of teachers

(SPP Co-ordinator)

4. CRITERIA

(This section to be completed by SPP Co-ordinator after
ensuring that all criteria have been met)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
A. Approved by District Council		
B. Approved by District Development Committee		

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
C. Community has reasonably exhausted other possible sources of local and national assistance	_____	_____
D. Suitable lot and clear land title	_____	_____
E. Sound construction plans	_____	_____
F. Community providing 25% of material cost and volunteer labour	_____	_____
G. SPP funds for materials only	_____	_____
H. After approval is given, foundation will be begun prior to release of funds to community	_____	_____
I. Teacher available	_____	_____
J. Community will establish and maintain contract with sponsor	_____	_____
K. Community understands that there is no further financial obligation on the part of the sponsor	_____	_____

5. SUPPORTING DATA (Attach or describe the following on a separate sheet.) All are necessary for approval.

- A. The need for the school/classroom;
- B. Local interest in and efforts for the school;
- C. Construction plans or drawing of the school/classrooms;
- D. General description of the community and surrounding area;
- E. Cost breakdown for total project, indicating amount of community contribution, either in cash or in value of materials;
- F. Outline map of country showing location of school.

6. SUGGESTED U.S. SCHOOL CONTACT: _____

7. APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Village Development Committee Chairman _____ Date _____

District Council Secretary _____ Date _____

School Partnership Programme Co-ordinator _____ Date _____

Director, Peace Corps/Botswana _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

ELECTION OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AT MOSOJANE
(NORTH EAST DISTRICT) 1973

MINUTES of Public Meeting held at Mosojane, 8 AUG 73
 (Language - Kalanga)

- PRESENT: a) Platform party, consisting of the North East District Council Development Officer (Chairman); the Assistant Community Development Officer (ACDO), Francistown; Chief Mosojane (Village Headman); the North East District Council Secretary; the Community Development Assistant; the writer.
- b) At commencement 42 people (25 men and 17 women), at the close 33 men and 27 women, i.e. 60 people (not including the platform party). 74 people participated in the election.*

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

SPEAKERS

Chief Mosojane Opening the meeting, remarks on small attendance.

Chairman Introduces platform party. Emphasises the importance of the meeting and talks of non-cooperation by the public at Mosojane. Asks everyone, including the Women's Club, to cooperate for the goal of village development. Asks the people to tell the visitors their problems and discuss possible solutions.

ACDO Repeats same points as Chairman and stresses importance of development. Asks the people to make their complaints known. Urges formation of VDC and PTA and explains their roles. Goes into relationship between VDC, PTA, Councillor and Headman. People should analyse their own problems, not outsiders.

Council Secretary Stresses that the Botswana Government is interested in developing the whole of Botswana, including the North East District. Talks of a chain of communication for solving problems: public-VDC-District Council-Government-Parliament. Four aspects concern of Council: Roads, Health, Education, Water - the requirements of a human being. The role of the VDC and Council (councillor): problems cropping up in the village should be given to the Councillor to convey to the Council. "Mr. A. here was my principal. When a school head comes to my office I must listen with respect." [Laughter - reference to Head Teacher, present, wearing a bizarre jersey.] Councillors must be involved in all village problems, not just villagers, so that he can express needs of village more effectively at District Council. Proposals must come through the Councillor to the Council. [Provokes more laughter, thumps table, more smiles] Councillors report nothing - they say the people of Mosojane not willing to work. "When I talked to the VDC Chairman he said 'No, I have long resigned'."

(* Note: Population of Enumerator Area, 1971 census, 905)

[Much laughter] Importance of democracy. Local patriotism important - "people won't come from the Transvaal to do the work for you."

Chairman Asks the public for comments.

Mr. A. (Head Teacher) Complains at inactivity of present VDC. Poor attendance at kgotla meetings. Asks about relationship between village and District Council; says Chief and Councillor not interested in development.

Chairman

Mr. B. (Ex-teacher; PTA Chairman; ex-Treasurer, VDC) Greets visitors. Says visit will change the attitude of the people. Poor relationship between Chief and VDC (and younger progressive elements) - e.g. concerning the move to form a Co-op, Chief opposed/reluctant and remained unconvinced despite hearing the benefits explained to him. "When it comes to elections, let us mix young and old - young can advise older members, who also have advantages." Appeals for co-operation from public.

Mrs. M. (Chief's wife) Complains that the Women's Club have no club house.

Chairman Replies

Mr. C. (Ex-teacher) Complains vehemently at the way the previous VDC was formed - alleges that the former ACDO simply hand-picked rather than by public election. Welcomes visit - chance for a fresh start.

Chief M. Says too much gossip amongst the people around.

Mr. D. (Farmer, ex-VDC Chairman) [Some laughter as he stands up to speak] Says he was elected for one year and complains that no one else has been elected since his time was up. Tired of being a one man committee.

Mr. E. (Teacher) Compares VDC to a tree under which people sit for shade. Interest in VDC stimulated by visitors but up to village. Once the VDC had been elected, people told them to go ahead and develop the village themselves.

Chief M. Expresses surprise that it takes a visit before people can elect a VDC.

Chairman Advice can be got from extension workers, including CDA.

Council Secretary Expatiates on the theme; explains job of CDA et al. vis-à-vis Council. The installation of a chief depends on lineage, totem.

Mr. F. (Very old man, retired farmer) Poor attendance normally - surprised to see so many people.

Mr. G. (Farmer) Reacting to words of Messrs. B. and E.: if they knew the answers, why didn't they tell the people? [Speaks heatedly]

Chairman Replies to Mr. G. Election not by wards but by kgotla - the most able people for each position on the VDC.

Chief M.

Chairman Talks about District and National Development Plans.

Mr. B. Asks re proper relationship between District Council, Community Development Department, Councillor, VDC.

Council Secretary

Mr. E.

Chief M. More about relationship between various bodies.

Chairman

Mr. C. [Vehemently] Comments on what has been said.

Council Secretary Comments on public indifference and clash of personalities. "Don't let our grievances overshadow our opportunities."

Chief M. Comments.

Mr. C. Suggests another date to form VDC.

Chairman Complains at poor attendance, wonders if it could be remedied.

Mr. B. Suggests election proceed today.

Mr. A.

ACDO Supports Mr. B.'s suggestion.

[tea break]

Chief M. Suggests electing a number (11-12), who could then select their own officebearers.

Mr. G. Objects that they might all be PTA members.

Chairman Asks if the people want to vote.

Miss H. (Teacher) (and others) Yes.

Mr. I. (Trader) Asks about Chief's position.

Chairman Explains that he is an ex officio member.

ACDO Asks for three nominees for Chairman.

ELECTION the following were elected (see below for details)

Chairman	Mr. E.
Vice-Chairman	Mr. C.
Secretary	Mr. B.
Assistant Secretary	Mrs. K. (Housewife)
Treasurer	Mr. D.
Ordinary Members	Mr. G.
	Mr. I.

(The Chairman once elected was refused the right to nominate for other positions. During a recount for the position of Chairman the three candidates withdrew.)

Chairman General pep talk. Explains about co-operation and ex officio members.

Council Secretary Mobilising men and enthusiasm to work for an ideal based on the common good should be the fundamental basis of any plan for development.

ACDO Pep talk.

New VDC Chairman (Mr. E.) Emphasises need for proper book-keeping.

Council Secretary Refers to the relationship between VDC and other associations.

The meeting was closed.

- - - - -

DETAILS OF ELECTIONS

<u>Position</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Proposed by</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Elected</u>
<u>Chairman</u> (1 vote)	Mr. C.	Mr. F.	31	(runner-up; Vice-Chairman)
	Mr. J. (farmer)	Mr. E.	9	
	Mr. E.	Mr. I.	34	ELECTED
<u>Secretary & Asst. Secy.</u> (2 votes)	Mr. B. (outgoing Treasurer)	Mrs. T. (trader's wife)	37	ELECTED SECY.
	Mrs. K.	Mrs. Q. (house- wife)	30	ELECTED ASST. SECRETARY
	Mr. L.	Mr. G.	25	
<u>Treasurer</u>	Mr. D. (outgoing Chairman)	Mr. R. (farmer)	33	ELECTED
	Mr. N. (ex-tax collector; absent)	Mr. S. (teacher)	16	
<u>Members</u> (2 votes)	Mrs. M.	Mrs. K.	23	
	Mr. G.	Mrs. T. (house- wife)	28	ELECTED
	Mr. I.	Mr. A.	32	ELECTED
	Mr. O. (herbalist)	Mr. L.	12	

Notes: a) Most of those who spoke at the kgotla meeting beforehand were elected while only one who did not speak was successful.

b) Only one woman was elected out of two nominated (the Chief's wife being unsuccessful); but voting was not along lines of gender (nor did teachers vote as a block). Four women nominated candidates for election (out of twelve nominations). Women barely participated in the discussion preceding the election.

APPENDIX DBACKGROUND DATA ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES, 1974Introductory Notes

The tables that follow have been generously made available by the writer's former colleagues, Jack Parson and Denis Cohen, in Department of Government & Administration, the University of Botswana, Lesotho & Swaziland, who compiled them as part of the UBLs (Gaborone) Study of the Botswana General Election of 1974. They are reproduced without alteration except for the table numbers and a footnote. This data has not so far been published; some related figures were due to appear in an article by J. D. Parson in the Journal of Modern African Studies later in 1977.

The questionnaire was sent to all Local Government candidates (296, who contested the 176 Polling Districts but note that 66 BDP candidates were returned unopposed). Ignoring one or two which failed to reach their intended recipients, this gives a response rate to the questionnaire as follows: BDP: 55.7%; BIP: 40%; BNF: 46.6%; BPP: 34.8%; Overall: 49.7%.

	<u>BDP</u>		<u>BIP</u>		<u>BNF</u>		<u>BPP</u>		<u>ALL</u>	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<u>TABLE D.1</u>										
<u>CATTLE HOLDINGS OF</u>										
<u>COUNCIL CANDIDATES</u>										
1 - 25 cattle	34	34.7			8	29.7	7	43.8	49	33.3
26 - 50	27	27.6	2	33.3	3	11.1	3	18.7	35	23.8
51 - 100	16	16.3	3	50.0	7	25.9	2	12.5	28	19.0
more than 100	15	15.3			3	11.1	1	6.3	19	13.0
no answer	6	6.1	1	16.7	6	22.2	3	18.7	16	10.9

<u>TABLE D.2</u>										
<u>ACREAGE PLANTED BY</u>										
<u>COUNCIL CANDIDATES</u>										
none	1	1.0							1	0.7
less than 20 acres	41	41.8	2	33.3	13	48.2	7	43.7	63	42.9
20 acres and more	46	46.9	3	50.0	9	33.3	8	50.0	66	44.8
no answer	10	10.2	1	16.7	5	18.5	1	6.3	17	11.6

TABLE D.3
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
OF COUNCIL CANDIDATES

	<u>BDP</u>		<u>BIP</u>		<u>BNF</u>		<u>BPP</u>		<u>ALL</u>	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
No formal education	9	9.2	1	16.7	5	18.5			15	10.2
Primary only	58	59.2	4	66.7	13	48.1	11	68.7	86	58.5
Secondary	27	27.5	1	16.7	6	22.2	4	25.0	38	25.9
University	1	1.0			2	7.5			3	2.0
No answer	3	3.1			1	3.7	1	6.3	5	3.4

TABLE D.4
PRESENT OCCUPATION BY
COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Type of occupation ranked by frequency											
1	District Councillor	47	49.0	3	50.0	3	11.1	1	6.3	54	37.2
2	Businessman/Shop- keeper/Manager	18	18.8	1	16.7	6	22.2	6	37.4	31	21.4
3	Farming	16	16.7	2	33.3	6	22.2	3	18.7	27	18.6
4	Clerk/Office work/ Nurse/Bookkeeper/ Typist/Head Waiter/ Guide/Foreman	4	4.1			6	22.2	2	12.4	12	8.3
5	Skilled & Semiskilled excluding agric.	3	3.1					1	6.3	4	2.8
	(a) Politician					3	11.1			3	2.1
	(b) Minister of Religion	2	2.1			1	3.7			3	2.1
6	(c) Housewife	2	2.1			1	3.7			3	2.1
	(d) Messenger/Driver/ Cook/Deliveryman/ Security guard/ Barman/Storeman	1	1.0			1	3.7	1	6.3	3	2.1
7	Unemployed	1	1.0					1	6.3	2	1.4
	(a) Shop Assistant/ Salesman	1	1.0							1	0.7
8	(b) White collar (private Co.)							1	6.3	1	0.7
	(c) Land Board Member.	1	1.0							1	0.7

TABLE D.5
OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND* OF COUNCIL CANDIDATES

	Type of occupation ranked by frequency	<u>BDP</u>		<u>BIP</u>		<u>BNF</u>		<u>BPP</u>		<u>ALL</u>	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Clerk/Office worker/ Nurse/ Bookkeeper/ Foreman/Typist Head Waiter/Guide	35	35.7	1	16.7	18	66.7	5	31.3	59	40.1
2	Skilled & Semiskilled Excluding agric.	42	43.0	1	16.7	6	22.2	7	43.8	56	38.1
3	Farming	46	47.0	2	33.3	5	18.5	2	12.5	55	37.4
4	Businessman/Shop- keeper/Manager	23	23.5	1	16.7	1	3.7	5	31.3	30	20.4
5	Shop assistant/ Salesman	18	18.4	1	16.7	7	26.0	3	18.8	29	19.2
6	Civil Service/Police	21	21.4			4	14.3	1	6.3	26	17.7
7	Teacher/School Administrator	18	18.4			3	11.1	4	25.0	25	17.0
8	Messenger/Deliveryman/ Security Guard/Cook/ Driver/Storekeeper/ Barman	8	8.2			8	29.6	3	18.8	19	12.9
9	(a) Tribal Authority Employee	9	9.2	4	66.7	2	7.4			15	10.2
	(b) Miner/Mines	8	8.2	2	33.3	3	11.1	2	12.5	15	10.2
10	Labourer	4	4.1			3	11.1	1	6.3	8	5.4
11	(a) District Councillor	4	4.1	1	16.7	1	3.7			6	4.1
	(b) Soldier	3	3.1					3	18.3	6	4.1
12	Minister of Religion	3	3.1			2	7.4			5	3.4
13	White collar (Private company)	1	1.0					1	6.3	2	1.4
14	(a) S.A.C.I.D.	1	1.0							1	0.7
	(b) Trade Union	1	1.0							1	0.7

* I.e. previous occupation(s)

TABLE D.6
AGE OF COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Party	BDP	BIP	BNF	BPP	ALL
Average age	50.4	47.8	49.5	44.9	49.5

APPENDIX E

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AT GENERAL MEETINGS BY
NORTH EAST DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE NOMINATED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS
FOR THE 6 MONTH PERIOD FROM NOV./72 to JUNE /73

<u>Member</u>	<u>% of Possible Attendance</u>
1. District Commissioner [Chairman]	100
2. District Officer (Development) [Secretary]	100
3. Community Development Officer	100
4. Council Secretary	90
5. Regional Agricultural Officer	90
6. Council Chairman	80
7. Chairman Tati Land Board	80
8. Roads Engineer (North)	50
9. Town Clerk Francistown	50
10. Senior Medical Officer	40
11. Area 4 Superintendent [Water]	30
12. Officer Commanding No. 1 [Police]	25
13. Education Officer	10
14. Senior Veterinary Officer	10

Note: 1. If a member has sent an officer to represent him at a meeting, he has been recorded as present, at this meeting.

2. The Officer Commanding No. 1 District was co-opted as from April /73.

Source: Reference No. DDC/4 II (69)

APPENDIX F

CONFERENCE MINUTES OF
2ND NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF DDCs
GABORONE, 4TH-7TH DECEMBER, 1973

Summary of Follow-up Action required:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <u>Land Use Planning:</u> | 1.1 MOA to issue plans and, with Ministry of Local Government and Lands, to arrange tour of DDC's in February

1.2 DDC's to consider preparing land use plans

1.3 MOA to work out guidelines to guide Land Boards

1.4 Ministry of Local Government and Lands to arrange for MOA officials to advise Land Boards |
| 2. <u>Dams:</u> | 2.1 District Councils, with help from DDC's, to work out how to apply in their areas the Presidential Directive on operational responsibilities

2.2 MOA in consultation with DDC's and District Councils to organise syndicates and select the first 20 sites |
| 3. <u>Rural Industries:</u> | 3.1 District Production Development Sub-Committees of DDC's to be established to work with Mr. Bayliss in developing action on this front as appropriate to each District |
| 4. <u>District Councils Estimates:</u> | 4.1 1974/75 Recurrent Estimates proposal to be reexamined in order to justify increases to Government Estimates Committee

4.2 Ministry of Local Government and Lands to introduce improved procedures for estimates submissions by Councils

4.3 Ministry of Local Government and Lands to recommend removal of lowest level of Local Government Tax |
| <u>Staff</u> | 4.4 Council to post counterparts to Volunteers and suitable training to be arranged |
| <u>Construction Program</u> | 4.5 Ministry of Local Government and Lands directive LG. 19/1 of 3rd Dec 73 to be implemented forthwith including action report from DDCs by 1st January 1973 |

- 4.6 Consultation essential: C.D. staff to be mobilised for smaller villages
- 4.7 Builders' Brigades to be aided, in order to make their contribution
- 4.8 Ministry of Local Government and Lands to consider how to retain artisans employed with development grants in 1974
5. Community Development: 5.1 DC's requested to comment on Director's instructions
6. V.D.C.'s: 6.1 DC's and others requested to comment on BEC Paper and Draft Handbook
- 6.2 Ministry of Local Government and Lands to process DEMS Survey proposal
7. Regional/Physical Planning: 7.1 DDC's to be aware of new structure and capability in Ministry of Local Government and Lands to coordinate infrastructure construction in the Large Villages
- 7.2 DDC's to consider preparing plans for rural industrial areas, utilising the Pilane experience
- 7.3 Ministry of Local Government and Lands to work out relationships between Land Boards and Physical Planning Committees and DTP to organise training/education of Land Board members in physical planning
- 7.4 DTP should be fully involved in the preparation of Land Use Plans (see para 1.2)
8. Agricultural Extension: 8.1 MOA to note arrangements agreed for representation of MOA officials on DDC's
- 8.2 MOA and RDU to pursue funding of small scale local agricultural projects
9. Primary Education: 9.1 MOE to ensure that E.O.'s carry out regular inspections
- 9.2 Ministry of Local Government and Lands to appoint a full time officer to be responsible for Primary Education
- 9.3 Councils and DDC's should be consulted about any proposal to alter ministerial responsibility for Primary education
- 9.4 E.O.'s should be appointed ex-officio members of Council Education Committees
10. Planning and Management: 10.1 DDC's should establish typing pools wherever possible
- 10.2 D.C.'s should keep in touch with the RDU

11. Roads:
- 11.1 Councils are free to attempt to build up a Road Department if they wish
 - 11.2 MWC to negotiate Grader hire contracts for Councils
 - 11.3 MWC to post an officer to advise Councils on road problems
12. Water:
- 12.1 Coordination required on the siting of livestock watering points (boreholes and stock dams) between MRWA, MOA, and Ministry of Local Government and Lands
 - 12.2 DDC's to complete action requested by Ministry of Mineral Resources and Water Affairs of future plans for boreholes and rural village supplies
 - 12.3 MRWA to make plans, in consultation with MIGL and DDC's, for the construction of Village dams for human consumption, where boreholes are unsuitable and there is no other water source
13. Poverty and Development:
- 13.1 There should be more specific planning for the poverty group of the population both by national planners and by field staff
14. Rural Income Survey:
- 14.1 D.C.'s will be requested to introduce the survey at Kgotla meetings
15. Livestock Marketing:
- 15.1 BMC should establish a quarterly floor price
 - 15.2 Consultants should study the possibility of expanding access of cattle owners to the BMC
 - 15.3 Field Staff should publicise auctions and further popularise livestock marketing cooperatives.

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND LANDS - GABORONE
File LG. 19/1/3

12th December, 1973

Key to Abbreviations

DDC	District Development Committee
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
CD	Community Development
DC	District Commissioner
VDC	Village Development Committee
BEC	Botswana Extension College
DEMS	(University) Division of Extra-Mural Services
DTP	Department of Town Planning
RDU	Rural Development Unit
MOE	Ministry of Education
EO	Education Officer
MWC	Ministry of Works & Communications
MRWA	Ministry of Mineral Resources & Water Affairs
MIGL	Ministry of Local Government & Lands
BMC	Botswana Meat Commission

APPENDIX GWEALTH AND VDC MEMBERSHIP

<u>VILLAGE</u>	<u>NO OF WEALTHY IN VILLAGE</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>NUMBER OF WEALTHY ON VDC:-</u>		
			<u>Ex Officio</u>	<u>Elected</u>	<u>Position on VDC</u>
R	3	1	-	1	(Chairman)
S	4	2	1	1	(Secretary)
T	8	1	1	-	Vice-Chairman
U	8	2	-	2	O.M.; (O.M.)
V	8	3	2	1	(O.M.)
W	11	3	2	1	O.B.
X	21	5	2	3	(Chairman); (Chairman); (Asst. Secy.)
Y	31	4	3	1	O.M.
Z	78	8	3	5	O.B.; O.B./O.M.; O.M.; O.M.; (O.M.)

Notes: 1. The villages are not identified here by name for obvious reasons of confidentiality.

2. "Wealth" defined as paying maximum rate of Local Government Tax, and/or holding cattle above the figure generally regarded in each district as making someone "wealthy".

3 The catchment area for the first column varies somewhat from district to district depending on the settlement pattern and the definition of "village"

4 O.M. = Ordinary Member

5 O.B. = Office-bearer = held more than one office

6 Position in brackets indicates held for only part of the period

7 Last column excludes purely ex officio position, but includes ex officio member elected to office.

THE RISING CONSULTATION

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Organ of the Bechuanaland Democratic Party


February



**FA O
BATLA**

**IF YOU
WANT**

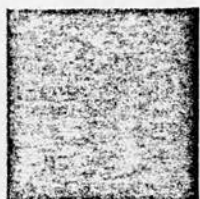
**SERETSE
KHAMA**

SENYA TALAMA E KHUBIDU
MO ENFOLOPONG JAANG 

UT THE RED DISC IN THE
ENVELOPE THUS 



BOTSWANA NATIONAL FRONT



Tswana E Ntsho

BATHOEN II C.B.E.

**Mmueleli wa batho
Modiredi wa lefhatsho**

*Chief for forty-one years • Chairman African Council for
seventeen years*

Has served on the following public bodies:-

MOENG GOVERNING COUNCIL
ADVISORY BOARD ON AFRICAN EDUCATION
SETSWANA ORTHOGRAPHY COMMITTEE
GAITSKELL COMMISSION
LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA, LESOTHO
AND SWAZILAND
DIRECTOR BOTSWANA MEAT COMMISSION
MILITARY PENSIONS BOARD
CHAIRMAN, BOTSWANA MUSEUM

and many more

TLHOPHA TALAMA E NTSHO
VOTE THE BLACK DISC

APPENDIX JSTATEMENT BY PRESIDENT

House of Chiefs 25 November 1968

Mr. Chairman and Members. The last time I attended your meeting was early in 1966, when I, as Prime Minister, my colleagues and this House were actively engaged in the considerations for the Independence Constitution. I have not since then had the opportunity to attend your meetings or to talk to you, but I have followed the reports of your deliberations here, and your activities in and out of this House, with a great deal of interest.

As Members of the House of Chiefs, you have an important role to play in the development of this country and its people, and it always pleases Government to learn that some of you are striving hard to achieve this great goal, which we, the people of Botswana, have set ourselves.

It is unfortunate, and, indeed, regrettable, that this cannot be said of all of you. For this reason, I had occasion in March of this year during the debate on the Appropriation Bill to express clearly to the National Assembly my views on the position and responsibilities of Chiefs in a democratic Botswana. For this reason also, I have decided to come and talk to you on the participation of Chiefs in politics.

The present constitutional position of Chiefs, as well as their position under the Chieftainship Law and the Local Government (District Councils) Law, has been established on the basis the Chiefs would play a non-partisan role in the national life of Botswana. It is quite clear from paragraph 4 of the Report of the 1963 Constitutional Conference (the conclusions of which were endorsed, on behalf of the Chiefs of Botswana, by Kgosi Bathoen II, Kgosi Mokgosi III and Kgosi Linchwe II) that the House of Chiefs was constituted and given its present functions in order to facilitate the establishment of a harmonious relationship between non-political, traditional institutions and a developing political government.

The House of Chiefs endorsed the proposals for the independence constitution subject to a number of changes relating to the House. These changes were agreed at the Independence Conference at Marlborough House in London in 1966, and the representative of the House of Chiefs, Kgosi Bathoen, accepted the conclusions of the Conference on behalf of the House. If the Chiefs now, by their conduct, depart from the basis on which their position in the body politic was established, they will throw into issue the whole question of whether these institutions should be maintained.

One of the most important considerations, which will go to enhance the Chieftainship in present times, is the full confidence which the people will have in Chiefs. Any Chief or hereditary authority who identifies himself with one particular political party naturally estranges himself from those of his subjects who support or are members of another political party. The odium does not just end there. An hereditary authority who takes an active part in politics immediately ceases to be regarded in his community as the impartial arbitrator in people's affairs.

This concept of impartiality, it is suggested, is probably the basis from which stems the respect and authority which Chiefs command from their subjects. The question of impartiality applies with particular force to Chiefs as Presidents of the highest Courts in the tribal set-up and one would not normally expect to see any impartial judge taking active part in politics. Once all these aspects of the chiefly position outlined above are destroyed, it is obvious that the need to keep the institution in being, would disappear.

However, these are considerations for hereditary authorities to think about. Government's position in circumstances where Chiefs take an active part in politics must be explained. It is maintained that Chiefs hold positions which require non-alignment in the sphere of politics. By engaging in politics they immediately change the nature of their office. If the character of the Chieftainship office changed then the principles upon which the Constitution is based, in so far as the position of Chiefs was concerned, would have to be reviewed and some amendments made in the laws of the country or new legislation enacted to regulate the changed position of hereditary authorities.

It is to be emphasised that unless the present trend where Chiefs freely engage in politics was to cease forthwith, the need will arise for the Constitution to be amended to cover the situation. Chiefs, of course, have a choice even under present arrangements. Although there is no express prohibition on the Chiefs to take part in politics in our laws, Government takes the view that any Chief or traditional authority who wants to engage in politics must first resign his Chiefly office. It is to be noted that Government does not support the present practice whereby Chiefs participate in politics whilst holding office and would consider taking appropriate steps to control the situation if this continued hereafter.

No doubt, honourable Members would like to consider this. Copies of my statement will be distributed and, should the Members wish to ask any questions or make any comments, the Minister of State will be available.

House of Chiefs
Official Report - Tenth Meeting
25 November 1968

APPENDIX K

DISTRICT DATA

FIGURE K.1

CENTRAL DISTRICT
OCCUPATIONS OF CASH
EARNING POPULATION

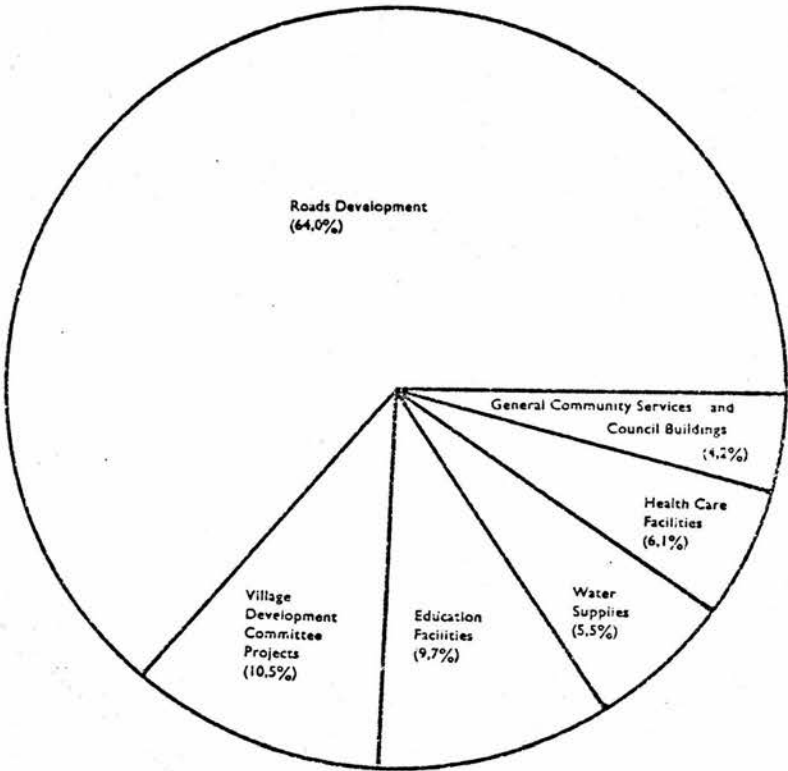


FIGURE K.2

NORTH EAST DISTRICT
OCCUPATIONS OF CASH
EARNING POPULATION

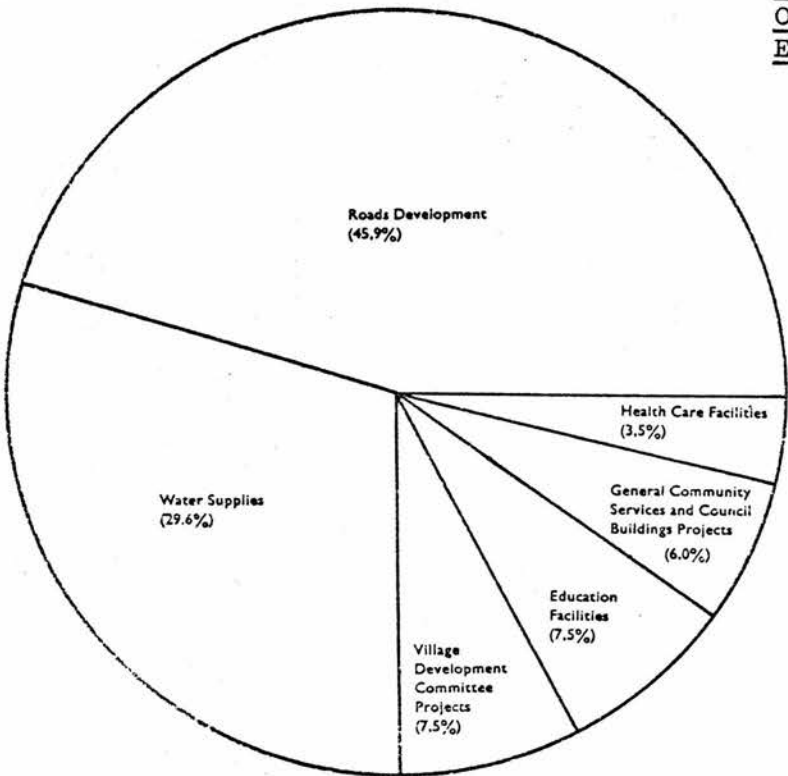


FIGURE K.3

SOUTHERN DISTRICT - NGWAKETSE AREA
OCCUPATIONS OF CASH
EARNING POPULATION

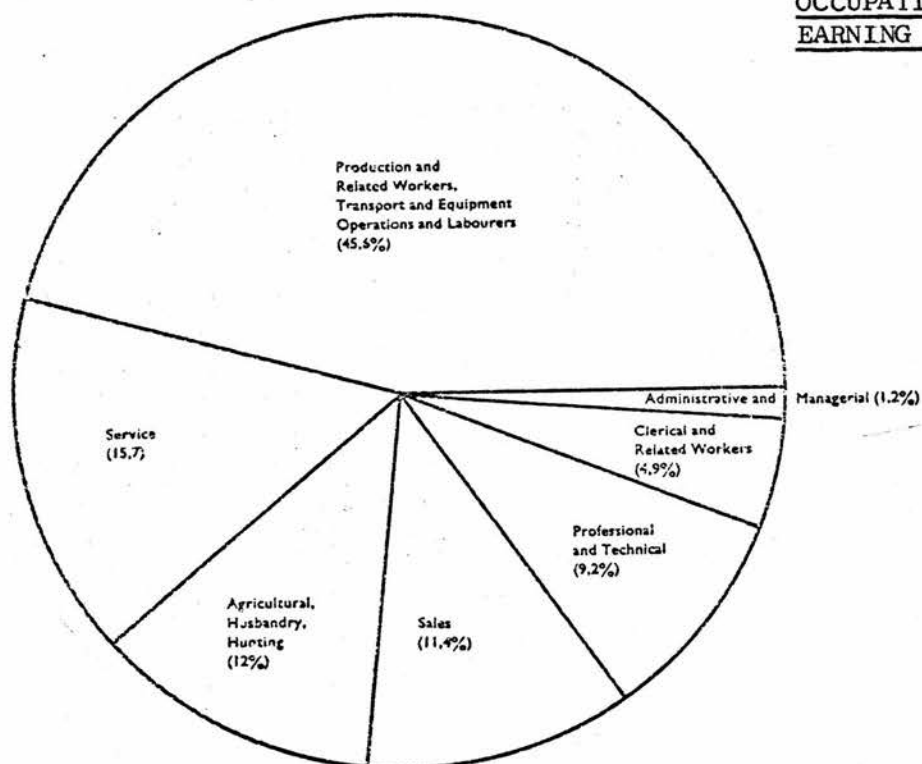


FIGURE K.4

SOUTHERN DISTRICT - BAROLONG AREA
OCCUPATIONS OF CASH
EARNING POPULATION

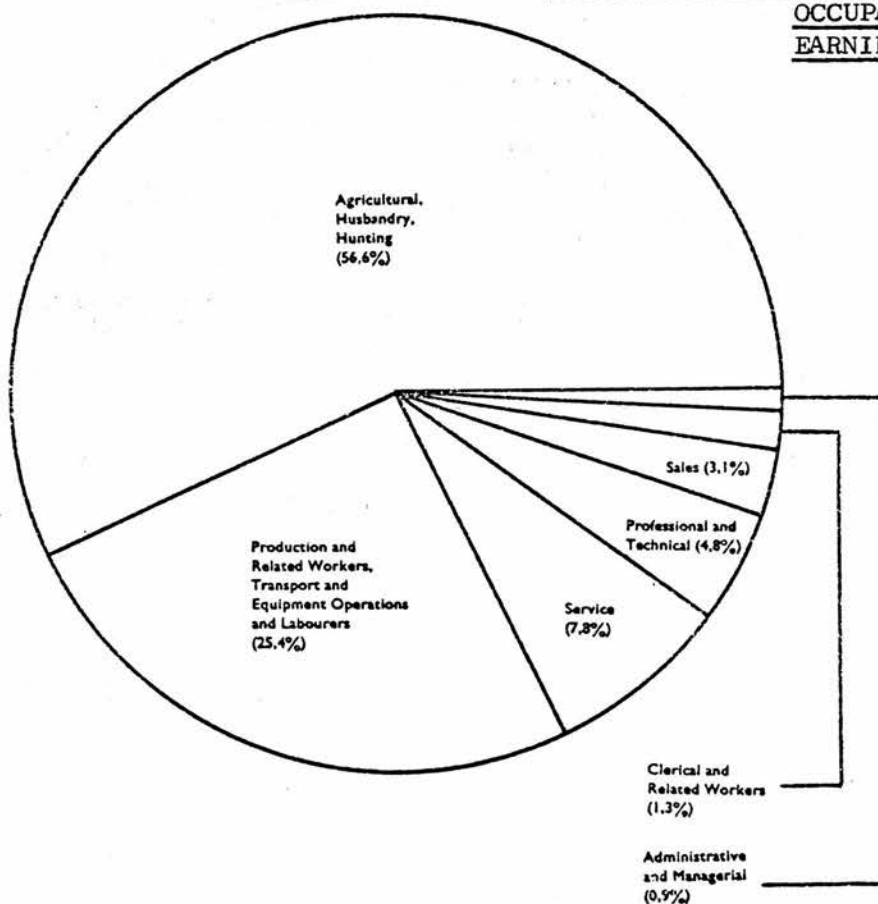


FIGURE K.5
CENTRAL DISTRICT COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE

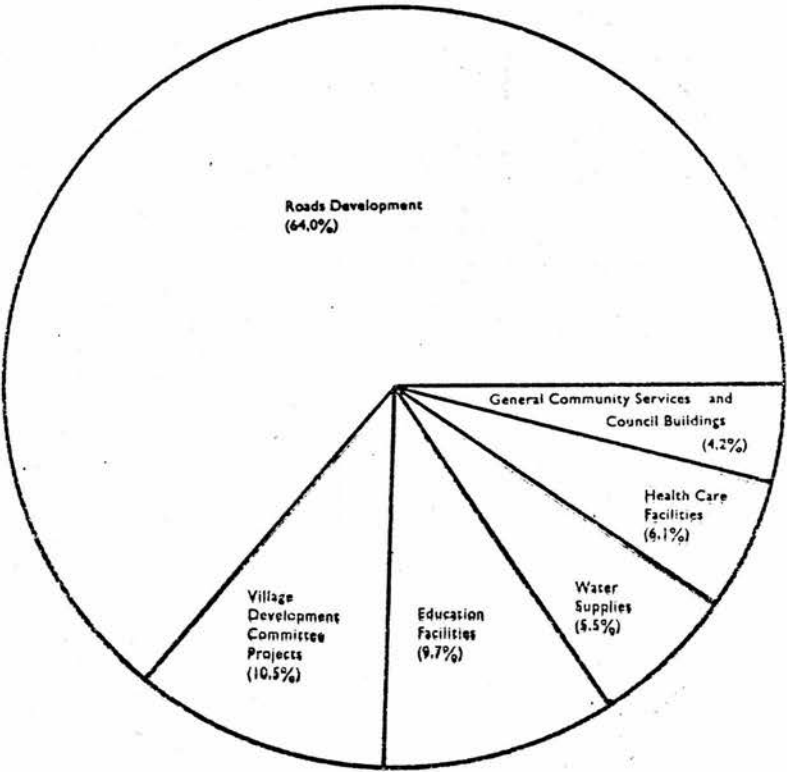


FIGURE K.6
NORTH EAST DISTRICT COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE

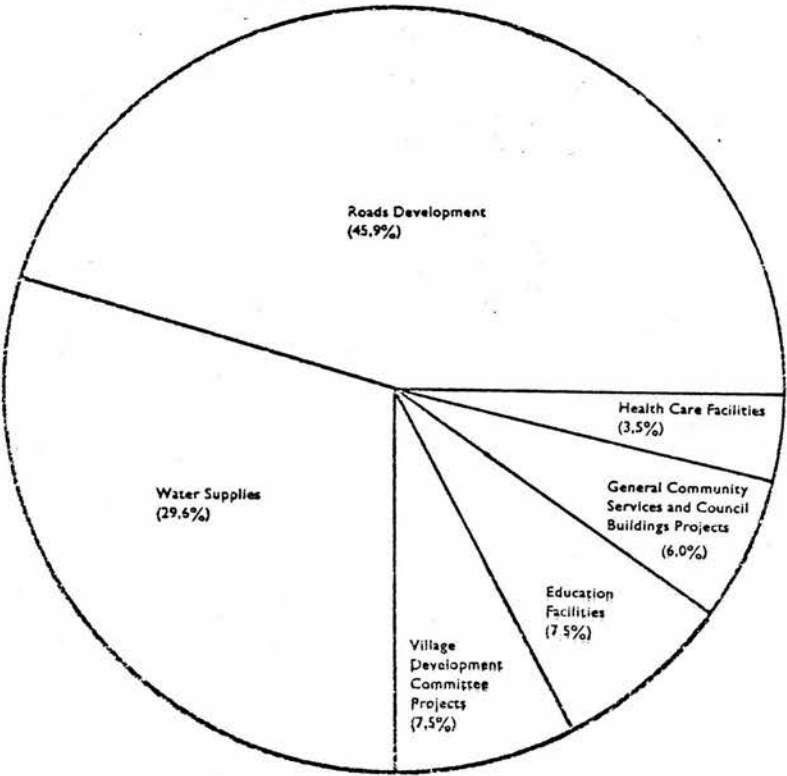
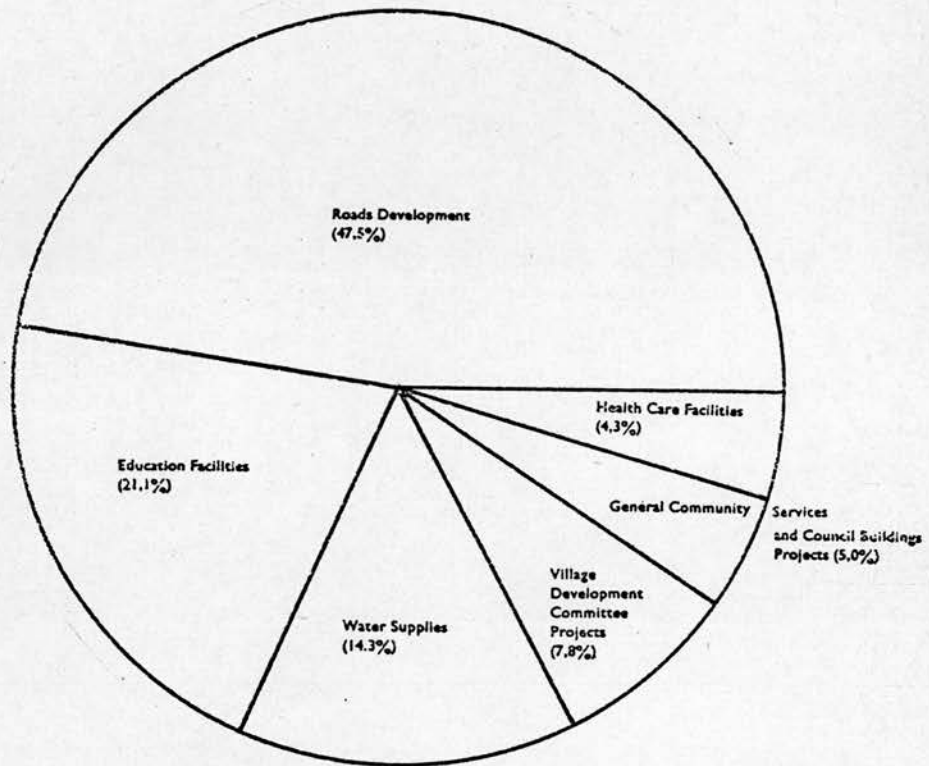


FIGURE K. 7SOUTHERN DISTRICT COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE

SOURCE FOR APPENDIX K: Republic of Botswana, National Development Plan 1973-78 Part III: Development Plans for Local Authorities

APPENDIX LLOCAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS, 1966TABLE L.1GENERAL INFORMATION

	<u>Areas:</u> <u>square</u> <u>miles</u>	<u>Pop.:</u> <u>Census</u> <u>1964</u>	<u>No of</u> <u>Mem-</u> <u>bers</u> <u>*</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Elect-</u> <u>orate</u>	<u>Poll 13 June 1966</u> <u>Electorate</u> <u>(seats)</u>	<u>Votes</u> <u>cast</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No of</u> <u>Empl-</u> <u>oyees</u>
1 Francistown	6	9479	12	3482	3482(8)	2747	78.9	59+
2 Lobatsi	6	7604	12	2398	1920(5)	1183	61.6	25+
3 Gaberones	6	3849	12	2162	417(2)	222	53.2	61+
ALL 12 COUNCILS	220000	542072	210	187881	103555(82)	46947	45.3	634+
ALL DISTRICTS	219982	521140	174	179839	97736(67)	42795	43.8	489+
1 Central	56070	207913	38**	80291	47230(17)	20723	43.9	256+
2 Ngwaketse	10518	81951	29**	27141	6529(6)	2342	35.9	58+
3 Kweneng	14719	73088	21	23215	8468(5)	4180	49.4	85+
4 North West	50212	47500	17**	17618	16649(12)	4589	27.6	34+
5 Kgatleng	2798	32118	19**	8755	7464(12)	4128	55.3	16+
6 North East	2056	25206	10	7872	7872(7)	4350	55.3	7+
7 South East	785	20649	15**	5720	3524(8)	2483	70.5	20+
8 Kgalagadi	42381	16407	13	5889	Nil	Nil	Nil	9+
9 Ghanzi	40443	16308	12	3338	Nil	Nil	Nil	4+

* Includes both elected and nominated Councillors

+ Excludes about 1700 teachers and casuals

** Includes Chairman appointed by Order

TABLE L.2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

	<u>Sal., Wages</u>	<u>Total gross exp.</u>	<u>Income from specific services</u>	<u>Total net cost</u>	<u>NET COST OF SERVICES</u>		
					<u>General Admin.</u>	<u>Educ- ation</u>	<u>Health</u>
1 Francistown	25112	130247	69961	60286	11024	29455	2982
2 Lobatsi	13017	64772	11760	53012	12814	26548	2835
3 Gaberones	25206	100064	13260	87309	27575	23653	8999
ALL COUNCILS 12 months	215083	1197320	173620	1023700	216700	611500	29300
ALL DISTRICTS 6 months	75343	515068	33271	472797	76718	318146	6761
1 Central	34301	197104	10555	186549	26444	119401	5708
2 Ngwaketse	10608	72078	4525	67553	8786	53687	55
3 Kweneng	9816	69010	6750	53260	8653	32161	343
4 North West	8100	52335	2010	50325	14217	26796	110
5 Kgatleng	4092	37093	1600	35493	5718	29675	--
6 North East	1380	26541	2530	24011	3848	17993	--
7 South East	3092	17115	1180	15935	2330	10466	545
8 Kgalagadi	3114	28272	4000	24272	4122	16468	--
9 Ghanzi	840	15520	121	15399	2600	11499	--

<u>NET COST OF SERVICES (cont.)</u>							
	<u>Water</u>	<u>Ipel.</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Dest. Relief</u>	<u>Works, Transp.</u>	<u>New Vehicles</u>	<u>New Bldgs.</u>
			<u>Comm. Dev.</u>				
1 Francistown	--	200	Cr.197	--	7422	--	9400
2 Lobatsi	--	--	Cr.360	--	5175	3000	3000
3 Gaberones	--	--	332	--	24250	2500	--
ALL COUNCILS 12 months	40000	16850	6000	700	69300	9850	23500
ALL DISTRICTS 6 months	19992	16650	3195	340	15371	4350	11274
1 Central	10424	7000	1274	100	10598	2000	3600
2 Ngwaketse	2576	1000	230	20	1199	--	--
3 Kweneng	4105	3250	1056	75	617	--	3000
4 North West	371	1750	500	75	1932	--	4574
5 Kgatleng	--	--	--	--	--	--	100
6 North East	535	1500	135	--	--	--	--
7 South East	1109	1000	--	20	465	--	--
8 Kgalagadi	272	450	--	50	560	2350	--
9 Ghanzi	600	700	--	--	--	--	--

Note: Above figures given in Rands. At the time R2 = £1 Stg.

TABLE L.3

HOW "NET COST OF SERVICES" (TABLE L.2) IS MET

	<u>Rates</u>	<u>Non-specific income</u>	<u>Local Govt. Tax</u>	<u>Central Govt. Grant</u>	<u>Balances</u>
	R	R	R	R	R
1 Francistown	5	1120	51000	--	8161
2 Lobatsi	3700	1640	37500	12500	Cr.2328
3 Gaberones	14700	800	45000	12500	14239
ALL COUNCILS 12 months	18500	143560	630000	130000	101640 1023700
ALL DISTRICTS 6 months	--	90568	316000	52500	13729 472797
1 Central	--	35500	140000	10000	1049
2 Ngwaketse	--	4110	50000	5000	8443
3 Kweneng	--	14225	40000	5500	Cr.6465
4 North West	--	29555	23000	--	Cr.2230
5 Kgatleng	--	3350	20000	6000	6143
6 North East	--	170	10000	13500	341
7 South East	--	778	11000	2500	1657
8 Kgalagadi	--	2480	14000	5000	2792
9 Ghanzi	--	400	8000	5000	1999

Source for Appendix L: Bechuanaland Protectorate, Ministry of Local Government, Aide-Mémoire to Local Government Finance in Bechuanaland. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, collaborating with the German Foundation for Developing Countries. Seminar in Local Government Finances, Addis Ababa, 5th-17th Sept., 1966.

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It should be noted that, in addition to the items listed below, an important source was what are termed fugitive publications, i.e. documents (generally cyclostyled) which were public documents in the sense of being available on request from the relevant department, council, party, committee etc. (and this is true of many of the "official and semi-official publications" listed hereinafter) but were not published in the normal sense of the word. They include conference papers, background documents, draft District Development Plans, etc.

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